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FRENCH IDIOMS AND PROVERBS

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PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH EDITION

NINE years have elapsed since the last edition of this book was published and I have had to make more additions than in any previous revision. Rarely has a week passed without some better version, some unnoted reference or some fresh saying presenting itself for insertion. I hope that the fuller index will be of considerable help to those who have to translate English idioms into French.

It is of course impossible to find the first occasion on which a proverb has been printed; but I have added to most of them a quotation from some French classic. An asterisk has been placed before recognized proverbs, and these may well serve as a first course for students who do not wish to read through the whole book. In some cases I have added explanations of English proverbs; using the book, I have often found that students were as ignorant of 'to bell the cat' as they were of 'attacher le grelot'. The few colloquial French expressions that have been included should not be used in translations of serious English.

In compiling this small treatise during the past thirty years my chief quarries have been the dictionaries of Littré, Larousse, and, in a less degree, Tarver and Lacurne de Ste. Palaye. The best work on French proverbs is that of Le Roux de Lincy (in two volumes), of which the second edition was published in 1859. After that come the works of Quitard —the *Dictionnaire étymologique des Proverbes* (1842), and the *Études sur les Proverbes français* (1860). Some help has been afforded me by *Proverbes de la langue française* by D. Loubens; *Nos vieux Proverbes* by L. Larchey; *La Fleur des Proverbes français* by Gratet-Duplessis; *Argot moderne* by L. Rigaud, and *Le Courrier de Vaugelas* by E. Martin, in French; and in English by Ray's *Proverbs*, Bohn's *Handbook of Proverbs*,

Hazlitt's *English Proverbs* (in the preface of the 1886 edition of which there is a useful survey of collections of proverbs), Trench's *Proverbs and their Lessons*, and Belcour's *English Proverbs*. The curious may find additional matter in the *Quarterly Review* of July 1868, and *Notes and Queries* are an inexhaustible mine of information on the origins of sayings. These origins are discussed in Fournier's *L'Esprit des autres*, in Roger Alexandre's *Musée de la Conversation* (fourth ed., 1902), and in the accurate work of Mr. W. F. H. King, *Classical and Foreign Quotations* (third ed., 1904).

I have to thank many friends and correspondents for help in the work of compilation: in particular M. Georges Jamin, M. Marius Deshumbert, Mr. Walter Ripman, Mr. E. Latham, and Mr. W. G. Lipscomb.

DE V. P.-P.

PREFACE TO THE EIGHTH EDITION

The colloquial phrases of Paris change almost annually, and I have felt obliged to take advantage of a reprinting to add an appendix of the most common of these. In six years much may happen in a post-war world. Mr. Pearsall Smith in his thoughtful *Words and Idioms* says: 'The idiomatic richness of the French literary language is due to the fact that several of the best French authors—Montaigne, Molière and La Fontaine—wrote in a colloquial style close to the spoken language and full of popular locutions.'

A pleasant by-path to follow, if I had space, would be to dilate on the parodies of proverbs of which the French are so fond, such as *Où il y a de l'hygiène il n'y a pas de plaisir, Il faut battre son frère quand il est chauve* or *Qui trop embrasse manque le train.* I think it was the late Oscar Wilde who imitated this habit with 'Nothing succeeds like excess'.

FRENCH

IDIOMS AND PROVERBS

'*Omne epigramma sit instar apis; sit aculeus illi,*
Sint sua mella, sit et corporis exigui.'

[Thus translated by Archbishop Trench

'*Three things must epigrams, like bees, have all:*
Their sting, their honey, and their body small.']

[Thus by C. L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll)

'*Three things must epigrams, like bees, possess:*
Their sting, their honey, and their littleness.']

[And thus by my friend, the late F. Storr

'*An epigram's a bee: 'tis small, has wings*
Of wit, a bag of humour, and it stings.']

'*Celebre dictum, scita quapiam novitate insigne.*'
ERASMUS

'*The genius, wit, and spirit of a nation are discovered in its proverbs.*'—BACON

'*The people's voice the voice of God we call;*
And what are proverbs but the people's voice?'
JAMES HOWELL

'*What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.*'
POPE, *Essay on Criticism*

'*The wit of one man, the wisdom of many.*'—Lord JOHN RUSSELL
(*Quarterly Review*, Sept. 1850)

'*Les proverbes sont la raison même, heureusement exprimée.*'
HIPPOLYTE LUCAS

FRENCH
IDIOMS AND PROVERBS

Expressions to which an asterisk is prefixed are Proverbs.

A.

A. . . *Il ne sait ni A ni B* = He does not know B from a bull's foot; He cannot read; He is a perfect ignoramus.

Il m'a prouvé par A plus B que j'avais tort = He proved me wrong by logical reasoning, with mathematical precision.

Être marqué à l'A = To stand high in the estimation of others; To be of first-rate quality.

[This expression is supposed to have originated in the custom of stamping French coin with different letters of the alphabet. The mark of the Paris mint was an 'A', and its coins were supposed to be of a better quality than those stamped at provincial towns. But as this custom only began in 1418 by command of the Dauphin, son of Charles VI, and as the saying was known long previous, it is more probable that its origin is to be sought in the pre-eminence that A has always held in all Aryan languages, and that the French have borrowed it from the Romans. Compare MARTIAL, ii. 57, and our A1 at Lloyd's.]

Abandon. *Tout est à l'abandon* = Everything is at sixes and sevens, in utter neglect, in confusion, all anyhow.

[Also: *Tout va à la dérive.* See *Débandade.*]

Abattre. **Petite pluie abat grand vent* = A little rain lays much dust; Often quite a trifle calms a torrent of wrath.

[Compare:

'Hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta
Pulveris exigui iactu compressa quiescunt.'

VERGIL, *Georgics*, iv. 86-7.]

Abattre de l'ouvrage = To get through a great deal of work.

Aboi. *Être aux abois* = To be reduced to the last extremity; To be at bay; To be at one's wits' end.

[Compare Boileau, *Sat.* vii: 'Dès que j'y veux rêver, ma veine est aux abois.']

Abondance. **Abondance de biens ne nuit pas* = Store is no sore; One cannot have too much of a good thing.

Parler avec abondance = To speak fluently.

Parler d'abondance = To speak extempore.

Abonder. *Il abonde dans mon sens* = He is entirely of the same opinion as I am; He has come round to my opinion.

Abord. *Il a l'abord rude, mais il s'adoucit bientôt* = He receives you roughly at first, but that soon passes off.

À (or, *De*) *prime abord* = At first sight; At the first blush.

Aboutir. *Les pourparlers n'ont pas abouti* = The preliminary negotiations led to nothing.

Absent. **'Les absents ont toujours tort'* = When absent, one is never in the right.

['When a man's away,
Abuse him you may.'
Néricault-Destouches, *L'Obstacle imprévu*, i. 6.]

Absurde. *'L'homme absurde est celui qui ne change jamais'* = The wise man changes his opinion—the fool never.

[Barthélemy, *Palinode.* 1832.]

Accommodement. *Il est avec le ciel des accommodements* = One can arrange things with heaven.

[Compare Molière, *Tartufe*, iv. 5:

'Le ciel défend, de vrai, certains contentements,
Mais on trouve avec lui des accommodements.'

The scene in which Orgon, hidden beneath the table, learns Tartufe's hypocrisy.]

Un méchant accommodement vaut mieux que le meilleur procès = A bad arrangement is better than the best lawsuit.

['Souvent demeurent gueux de vingt procès gagnés.'
Boileau, *Épit.* ii.]

Accommoder. *Je l'accommoderai comme il faut* = I will give him a good hiding.

Il s'accommode de tout = He is satisfied with everything; He is easy to please.

Accord. *D'accord* = Granted.

Accorder. *Accordez mieux vos flûtes si vous voulez réussir* = You must agree better among yourselves if you wish to succeed.

[Generally in bad sense. 'Mettez, pour me jouer, vos flûtes mieux d'accord.'—MOLIÈRE, *L'Étourdi*, i. 4.]

S'accorder comme chien et chat = To live a cat and dog life.

Accoutumer. *Chose accoutumée n'est pas fort prisée* = Familiarity breeds contempt.

[The Latin version of a sentence in PLUTARCH'S *Morals* runs: 'Nimia familiaritas contemptum parit.'

L'habitude engendre le mépris.

'Jamais trop compagnon à nul ne te feras,
Car bien que moins de joye moins d'ennuy tu auras.'

German: 'Vertraulichkeit gegen Wenige,
Höflichkeit gegen Alle.'

'La plupart des héros sont comme certains tableaux; pour les estimer il ne faut pas les regarder de trop près.'—LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

'Peu d'hommes ont été admirés par leurs domestiques.'—MONTAIGNE, *Essais*, iii. 2.

'No man is a hero to his valet de chambre' occurs in Foote's *Patron*, ii. 31 (1764). This has been parodied by Heine, who said: 'No author is a man of genius to his publisher.']

Accrocher. *Un homme qui se noie s'accroche à tout* = A drowning man catches at a straw.

Il a accroché sa montre (pop.) = He has 'popped' his watch.

[Other popular synonyms are the following:—
Il a mis sa montre au clou (pop.) = His watch is up the spout.
J'ai porté ma montre chez ma tante (pop.) = My watch is at my uncle's. (*Le Mont de piété* = The pawnshop. See *Piété*.)]

Acheter. *Acheter à vil prix* = To buy dirt cheap, for a mere song.

Acheter chat en poche = To buy a pig in a poke.

Acheter par francs et vendre par écus = To buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest; To sell at a high profit.

Achever. *C'est un voleur achevé* (or, *fieffé*) = He is an arrant thief.

Achoppement. *La pierre d'achoppement* = The stumbling-block.

Acquérir. **Le bien mal acquis ne profite jamais* = Ill-gotten gains benefit no one; Cheats never prosper; Ill got, ill spent.

Acquit. *Faire quelque chose par manière d'acquit* = To do something for form's sake, perfunctorily.

[This is a shortened form of *faire quelque chose pour l'acquit de sa conscience* = to do something to satisfy one's conscience.]

Donner l'acquit = To break (at billiards).

Pour acquit = Received (on bills).

Acte. *Faire acte de présence* = To put in an appearance.

Adieu. *Sans adieu* = I shall not say good-bye; I shall see you again soon.

[Comp. 'Sans adieu, chevalier, je crois que nous nous reverrons bientôt.'—LESAGE.]

Adresse. *Le trait est arrivé à son adresse* = The shaft (*or*, arrow) hit the mark; He took the hint; That was a home-thrust.

Adresser. *Vous vous adressez mal; Vous vous adressez bien* (ironic) = You have come to the wrong person; You have mistaken your man.

Advenir. **Advienne que pourra* = Happen what may.

Affaire. *Cela fera parfaitement l'affaire* = That will do capitally; That will suit down to the ground.

C'est son affaire = That is his business, his look-out; That's the thing for him.

Ça, c'est mon affaire = That is my business; Leave that matter to me.

Il est sûr de son affaire = He will pay for it; He will catch it.

Je ne dis pas mes affaires aux autres = I do not tell others my plans (*or* business); I keep my concerns to myself.

J'entends votre affaire = I see what is to be done for you.

Ils parlent affaires = They are talking business.

[*Ils parlent boutique* = They are talking shop.]

Affaire. (*cont.*)

C'est une triste affaire = It is a sad business.

S'attirer une mauvaise affaire = To get into a mess, scrape.

Quand on a de l'esprit, on se tire d'affaire = When one has brains, one gets out of any difficulty.

[Distinguish between *se tirer* and *s'attirer* in these two sentences.]

Si quelque affaire t'importe, ne la fais pas par procureur = If you want a thing done, do it yourself.

L'affaire a été chaude = It was warm work (referring to a fight).

Une affaire d'honneur = A duel.

Où sont mes affaires? = Where are my things?

Les affaires ne vont pas (*ne marchent pas*) = Trade is dull, slack; There is nothing doing.

Je suis dans les affaires = I am in business.

['Les affaires? C'est bien simple, c'est l'argent des autres.'—Alex. Dumas fils, *La Question d'Argent*, ii. 7. Béroalde de Verville (1558-1612), in his *Moyen de Parvenir*, ed. 1856, p. 184, has the same thought; and Madame de Girardin in *Marguerite ou deux amours* (vol. 2, p. 104), published in 1852, made use of the same expression before Dumas.]

Mêlez-vous de vos affaires = Mind your own business.

Avoir affaire = To be occupied.

Avoir affaire à quelqu'un = To have to speak to (to deal with) a person.

[Sometimes as a threat:
Il aura affaire à moi = He will have to deal with me.]

Il vaut mieux avoir affaire à Dieu qu'à ses saints = It is better to deal with superiors than subordinates.

Avoir son affaire = To have what suits one. *J'ai mon affaire* = I have found what I want. *J'ai votre affaire* = I have got the very thing for you. *Il aura son affaire* (ironic) = He will catch it.

C'est toute une affaire = It is a serious matter; It means a lot of bother (*or*, trouble); It is quite a long story.

C'est une affaire faite = It is as good as done.

Affaire. (*cont.*)

Son affaire est faite = He is a dead man (of one dying); He is done for; He is a ruined man.

Faire son affaire = (of oneself) To succeed. *Il fait tout doucement son affaire* = He is getting on slowly but surely.

(Of others) To punish = *S'il le rencontre, il lui fera son affaire* = If he meets him he will give it to him, will 'do' for him.

Il a fait ses affaires dans les vins = He made his money in the wine trade.

J'en fais mon affaire = I will take the responsibility of the matter; I will see to it; I will take it in hand.

Vous avez fait là une belle affaire (or *un beau coup*) = You have made a pretty mess of it.

Une affaire de rien = A mere nothing, a trifle.

Il est hors d'affaire = He is out of danger.

Être au-dessous de ses affaires = To be unable to meet one's liabilities, to be unsuccessful.

Quelle affaire! En voilà une affaire! (ironic) = What a to-do! What a row about nothing!

La belle affaire! = Is that all? (i.e. it is not so difficult or important as you seem to think).

Il n'y a point de petites affaires = Every trifle is of importance.

Ceux qui n'ont point d'affaires s'en font = Those who have no troubles invent them; Idle people make business for themselves.

Les affaires sont les affaires = Business is business; One must be serious at work.

Ce scandale sera l'affaire de huit jours = That scandal will be a nine days' wonder.

Dieu nous garde d'un homme qui n'a qu'une affaire = God save us from the man of one idea.

[Because he is always talking of it, and tires every one. Compare 'Beware of the man of one book'.]

Chacun sait ses affaires = Every one knows his own business best.

**À demain les affaires sérieuses* = I will not be

Affaire. (*cont.*) bothered with business to-day; Time enough for business to-morrow.

[The saying of Archias, governor of Thebes, on receiving a letter from Athens warning him of the conspiracy of Pelopidas; he would not even open the letter. Soon after, the conspirators rushed in and murdered him and his friends as they were feasting.]

L'affaire est dans le sac = The matter is settled; The contract is signed.

On a étouffé l'affaire = The case was hushed up.

[Two quotations from La Fontaine are proverbial:—

'On ne s'attendait guère
À voir Ulysse en cette affaire.'

La Tortue et les deux Canards.

'Le moindre grain de mil
Serait bien mieux mon affaire.'

Le Coq et la Perle.]

Affamer. * '*Ventre affamé n'a point d'oreilles*' = A hungry man will not listen to reason. A hungry man is an angry man.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, ix. 18. A rhyming, and therefore late, Latin proverb says: 'Ieiunus venter non audit verba libenter.']

Afficher. *Défense d'afficher* = Stick no bills.

C'est un homme qui s'affiche = He is a man who tries to get talked about (generally in a disparaging sense).

[*Être affiché* is also said of a man who has been 'posted' at his club.]

Affront. *Faire affront à quelqu'un* = To shame some one in public.

Le fils fait affront à sa famille = The son is a disgrace to his family.

Boire (*essuyer* or *avaler*) *un affront* = To pocket an insult.

Affût. *Être à l'affût* = To be watching for a favourable opportunity; To be on the look-out. (See *Aguets.*)

Âge. *Il est entre deux âges* = He is middle-aged.

Il est président d'âge = He is chairman by seniority.

Le bas âge = Infancy.

Le bel âge = Childhood; Youth.

[Some idea is generally understood after *le bel âge*. Thus

Âge. (*cont.*) 'childhood' is not always the right translation. For an author *le bel âge* would be after thirty, for a politician later still, and so on. Chicanneau, in Racine's *Plaideurs*, calls sixty *le bel âge pour plaider* (i. 7). NOTE.—*Un bel âge* = A good old age.]

La fleur de l'âge = The prime of life.

Le moyen âge = The Middle Ages.

L'âge moyen = The average age.

L'âge de raison = Years of discretion.

On est de son âge = A man acts according to his years.

Agir. *Il s'agit de . . .* = The question is . . .; The point is . . .

Il s'agit de votre vie = Your life is at stake.

Il ne s'agit pas de cela = That is not the point.

Il s'agit bien de cela (ironic) = That is quite a secondary consideration; I have other things to think about.

Il s'agit bien de commencer la guerre = It is high time war was begun.

Agiter. **Qui s'agite s'enrichit* = If you wish to get rich, you must work (hustle); No pains, no gains; No sweat, no sweet.

[*La fortune ne vient seule, il faut aller la chercher.*]

Agonie. *Même à travers l'agonie la passion dominante se fait voir* = The ruling passion is strong in death.

['Elle a porté ses sentiments jusqu'à l'agonie.'—BOSSUET.

'And you, brave Cobham! to the latest breath
Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death.'
POPE, *Moral Essays*, i. 262.]

Son père est à l'agonie = His father is at death's door.

Aguets. *Il est aux aguets* = He is on the watch; He is in ambush. (See *Affût.*)

Aide. **Un peu d'aide fait grand bien* = Many hands make light work.

**Bon droit a besoin d'aide* = Even a good cause needs support.

Aider. **Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera* = God helps those who help themselves.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, vi. 18, *Le Chartier embourbé*, copying Régnier, *Sat.* xiii:

'Aydez vous seulement et Dieu vous aydera.'

Lat.: 'Dii facientes adiuvant.'
Aeschylus, *Persae* 742: ἀλλ' ὅταν σπεύδῃ τις αὐτός, χὠ Θεὸς συνάπτεται.
Sophocles, *Camicii*, frag. 633, in Dindorf's edition: Οὔκ ἐστι τοῖς μὴ δρῶσι σύμμαχος Τύχη.
Another Greek saying was: Σὺν Ἀθηνᾷ καὶ χεῖρα κίνει = With Minerva on your side, yet use your own hand.
Cromwell is reported to have said at the battle of Dunbar: 'Trust in God, but keep your powder dry.'
The Basques say: 'Quoique Dieu soit bon ouvrier, il veut qu'on l'aide.'
Dieu donne des noix, mais ne les casse pas.
'Quand nous n'agissons point, les dieux nous abandonnent.'
Voltaire.]

**À qui Dieu aide, nul ne peut nuire* = What God will, no frost can kill.

[German: Was Gott pflanzt, das bleibt.]

Aigle. *Il n'est vol que d'aigle* = No bird flies as well as the eagle; Supreme intelligence can always be recognized.

Aiguille. *De fil en aiguille* = Bit by bit; One thing leading to another.

['De propos en propos et de fil en eguille.'—Régnier, *Sat.* xiii.]

Raconter de fil en aiguille = To tell the whole matter from the beginning.

Disputer sur la pointe d'une aiguille = To raise a discussion on a subject of no importance; To split hairs.

**Chercher une aiguille dans une botte de foin* = To look for a needle in a bundle (bottle) of hay.

Aiguillon. **À dur âne dur aiguillon* = In dealing with obstinate natures one must use severe measures.

Aile. *Il en a dans l'aile* = He is winged (hurt).

Le ministère a du plomb dans l'aile = The ministry is nearing its end, is winged.

Il ne bat plus que d'une aile = He is almost ruined; He is on his last legs.

Aile. (*cont.*)

Voler de ses propres ailes = To act (*or*, shift) for oneself.

J'en tirerai pied ou aile = I will get something out of it.

[Idiom derived from carving a bird—to get a leg or a wing off it.]

C'est la plus belle plume de son aile (or, *le plus beau fleuron de sa couronne*) = It is the finest gem of his crown.

Aimer.

**Qui aime bien châtie bien* = Spare the rod and spoil the child.

['He that spareth the rod hateth his son.'—*Proverbs*, xiii. 24.]

Aimer quelqu'un comme la prunelle de ses yeux = To love somebody like the apple of one's eye.

Aimer n'est pas sans amer = War, hunting, and love are as full of trouble as of pleasure.

[German: 'Keine Liebe ohne Leid.']

Quand on n'a pas ce que l'on aime il faut aimer ce que l'on a = If you cannot get crumb you had best eat crust.

[This sentence is found in a letter from Bussy Rabutin to Madame de Sévigné, May 23, 1667. It is also found in Thomas Corneille's *L'Inconnu* (Prologue).

'Quoniam id fieri quod vis non potest, velis id quod possit.'—Terence, *Andria*, ii. 1. 6.

'When things will not suit our will, it is well to suit our will to things.'—Arab proverb.

'Let not what I cannot have
My peace of mind destroy.'
Colley Cibber, *The Blind Boy.*

Also: *Il faut labourer avec les bœufs que l'on a.*]

**Qui aime Bertrand, aime son chien* = Love me, love my dog.

['Qui me amat, amet et canem meum.'—St. Bernard, *In Fest. S. Mich. Serm.*, i. sec. 3.]

**Qui aime bien, tard oublie* = True love dies hard.

Qui m'aime me suive = Peril proves who dearly loves.

[Words attributed to Philippe VI when at a Council during his war with Flanders the Connétable de Châtillon alone stood by him, saying all times were suitable to the brave. The same words are attributed to François Ier at the battle of Marignan, 1515. Colonel La Bedoyère used them to his regiment at

Aimer. (*cont.*) Grenoble in March 1815, on the approach of Napoleon. Blanche de Castille used to say: J'aime qu'on m'aime comme j'aime quand j'aime.]

Air. *En plein air; Au grand air* = In the open air.

Être entre deux airs
Être dans un courant d'air } = To be in a draught.

Avoir toujours le pied en l'air = To be always on the go.

Il parle en l'air = He talks without thinking of what he is saying, at random, not seriously.

Je vais prendre l'air du bureau = I am just going to look in at the office.

Prendre un air de feu = To go near the fire for a few minutes to warm oneself.

À votre air on ne vous donnerait pas vingt-cinq ans = From your looks I should take you for less than five-and-twenty.

Vivre de l'air du temps = To live upon nothing (i.e. to eat very little).

Elle a quelque chose de votre air = She takes after you; she looks somewhat like you.

Il a un faux air d'avocat = He looks something like a barrister.

La maison est tout en l'air = The whole house is in a turmoil, an uproar.

Cela en a tout l'air = It looks uncommonly like it.

Il a un air (or, *l'air*) *comme il faut* = He has a very gentlemanly manner.

Algèbre. *C'est de l'algèbre* (*du grec, du latin*) *pour lui* = It is Greek to him (i.e. incomprehensible).

[Compare: 'C'est de l'hébreu pour moi.'
MOLIÈRE, *L'Étourdi*, iii. 3;
and: 'C'est du haut allemand' = It's double Dutch.

'It was Greek to me', says Casca in *Julius Cæsar*, i. 2. *Spanish: 'Me habla en griego.']

Allemand. *Chercher une querelle d'Allemand* = To pick a quarrel about nothing, without rhyme or reason.

[This saying has been accounted for as follows:—During the thirteenth century there lived in Dauphiné a very powerful

Allemand (*cont.*) clan of the name of Alleman. Its members were bound together by close ties of relationship; and if any one attacked one member of the clan he had the whole to reckon with. From the vigour with which they resented any wrong, no matter how slight, arose the expression *Une querelle d'Alleman.* See M. Jules Quicherat's article on *La famille des Alleman* in the *Revue historique de la noblesse*, Part vi. Littré, however, is inclined to think that the expression does refer to the Germans, as there was a variant: *une querelle d'Allemagne.*]

Aller. **Tant va la cruche à l'eau qu'à la fin elle se casse* = The pitcher that often goes to the well gets broken at last; You may do a thing once too often; Long threatened comes at last.

[This has been travestied: *Tant va la cruche à l'eau qu'à la fin elle s'emplit.*—Beaumarchais (*Mariage de Figaro*). The Germans have an equivalent: 'Der Krug geht so lange zum Brunnen bis er bricht.']

**Doucement va bien loin* = Fair and softly goes far; Slow and sure wins the race.

[The Italian equivalent is: 'Chi va piano va sano e va lontano.'

'Qui trop se hâte en cheminant
En beau chemin se fourvoye souvent.'

'On en va mieux quand on va doux.'—La Fontaine, *Les Cordeliers de Catalogne.*]

Il y allait du bonheur de ma famille = The happiness of my family was at stake.

Ce jeune homme ira loin = That young man will make his way in the world, has a future before him.

Au pis aller = Should the worst come to the worst.

Un pis aller = A makeshift.

Aller son petit bonhomme de chemin = To jog along quietly.

Tout son bien s'en est allé en eau de boudin (*en brouet d'andouilles, à vau l'eau*) = All his property has gone to wreck and ruin. (See *Eau.*)

Cela va tout seul = There is no difficulty in the way; That is no trouble; That works of its own accord.

Cela va sans dire = That is a matter of course; It stands to reason.

Cela va de soi = That follows naturally.

Cela va comme sur des roulettes = That goes smoothly, swimmingly; That is as right as a trivet.

Aller. (*cont.*) *Rien ne va plus* = No more betting (for the game has begun).

Il ne reviendra pas, allez! = Depend upon it, he will not return!

Va pour mille francs! = Done! I'll take £40.

Aller cahin-caha } (lit.) To limp along.
Aller clopin-clopant } (fig.) To rub along quietly, neither very well nor very ill.

Elle le fait aller = She makes him do what she likes.

Le rouge va bien aux brunes = Red suits dark women well.

Allons! = Come, now!

Allons donc! = You are joking.

Allumer. *'Il n'est bois si vert qui ne s'allume'* (CLÉMENT MAROT) = There is nothing so difficult that cannot be done in time.

Almanac. *C'est un almanac de l'an passé* = He's a back number.

Alors. *Alors comme alors* = Wait till that happens, and then we will see what is to be done; All in good time.

Ambre. *Fin comme l'ambre* = As sharp as a needle.

[This is said to have originated in the scent of ambergris, which is of a subtle, penetrating nature.]

Amende. *Il a fait l'amende honorable* = He apologized courteously, in a gentlemanly way.

Amener. *Cette preuve est amenée de bien loin* = That proof is very far-fetched.

Ami. **Qui prête à l'ami perd au double* = 'For loan oft loses both itself and friend.'

[*Hamlet*, i. 3.]

**On connaît les amis au besoin* = A friend in need is a friend indeed.

[Also: *C'est dans le malheur qu'on connaît ses amis.*

'Chacun se dit ami, mais fou qui s'y repose:
Rien n'est plus commun que ce nom,
Rien n'est plus rare que la chose.'

LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, iv. 17.

Ami. (*cont.*)

'Amicus certus in re incerta cernitur.'—Ennius.
'Nihil homini amico est opportuno amicius.'—Plautus.
'Vulgare amici nomen, sed rara est fides.'—Phaedrus, iii. 9.
'Les amis sont comme les parapluies, on ne les a jamais sous la main quand il pleut.'—Théodore de Banville.

Un ami véritable est un bienfait des dieux.

Prosperity gains friends, adversity tries them.
Friends and mules fail us at hard passes.
In times of prosperity friends will be plenty,
In times of adversity not one in twenty.

'Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos;
Tempora, si fuerint nubila, solus eris.'
Ovid, *Tristia*, ix. 5.

'Heureux, vous trouverez des amitiés sans nombre;
Mais vous resterez seul si le temps devient sombre.'
Ponsard, *L'Honneur et l'argent.*]

**Mieux vaut ami en voie que denier en courroie* = A friend at court is better than money.

[*En voie = en voyage*, and the sense is that when travelling it is better to have a friend than money.]

Il ne faut prendre de son ami tout ce qu'on peut = Friends are like fiddle-strings, they must not be screwed too tight.

[Also : *L'amitié passe le gant.*]

'Les amis de l'heure présente
Ont la nature du melon,
Il en faut essayer cinquante
Avant qu'on rencontre un bon.'
Claude Mermet (1550–1605).

= Trust not a new friend nor an old enemy; Acquaintances are many, but friends are few.

Amitié. *Faites mes amitiés à votre frère* = Remember me kindly to your brother.

Amour. *Faites-le pour l'amour de moi* = Do it for my sake.
L'amour force toutes les serrures = Love laughs at locksmiths.

[Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, v. 96.
'L'amour est plus fort que toutes les entraves qu'on lui oppose.'—A. Mezières, *Vie de Mirabeau.*]

Vivre d'amour et d'eau fraîche (or, *claire*) = To live on bread and cheese and kisses.

**On revient toujours à ses premières amours* = One

Amour. (*cont.*) always returns to one's first love; Who loves well, forgets ill.

[C. G. Étienne, *Joconde*, iii. 1.]

Il n'y a point de laides amours = All your geese are swans; Every lover has a fair lady; Beauty lies in lovers' eyes.

[German: 'Jeder Mutter Kind ist schön.'
The idea originates with Theognis, *Ep.* 13.]

Jamais l'amour ne se paye que par l'amour = Love can neither be bought nor sold, its only price is love.

['Amour au cœur me poinct
Quand bien aimé je suis,
Mais aimer je ne puis
Quand on ne m'aime point.
Chascun soit adverty
De faire comme moy,
Car d'aimer sans party
C'est un trop grand esmoy.'

Clément Marot, *Chansons*, xxi.

'Lieb ohne Gegenlieb ist wie eine Frage ohne Antwort.']

'Amour, amour, quand tu nous tiens,
On peut bien dire—Adieu prudence!'
= Lovers were ever lunatics.

[The quotation is from La Fontaine, *Fables* iv. 1.
The Latin saying is briefer: 'Amantes, amentes.'
Compare: 'For to be wise and love exceeds man's might.'
Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, iii. 2;
and: 'Le premier soupir de l'amour
Est le dernier de la sagesse.'
Bret, *École amoureuse*, sc. 7.
'Qui que tu sois, voici ton maître,
Il l'est, le fut, ou le doit être.'
Voltaire, *Inscription pour une statue de l'Amour dans les Jardins de Maisons.*
'A l'Amour on résiste en vain;
Qui n'aima jamais aimera demain.'
De Benserade, *L'Amour*, ed. 1690, p. 234.]

Amour et seigneurie ne se tiendront jamais compagnie = Love and lordship love no fellowship; Lovers and princes can endure no rivals.

L'amour apprend les ânes à danser = Love makes the clumsiest graceful.

On dirait qu'il le fait pour l'amour du bon Dieu =

Amour. (*cont.*) He does it with such bad grace that one would say he did it for conscience' sake.

Amuser. *Amuser le tapis* = To talk a great deal without coming to the point; To talk time away.

Ne vous amusez pas en route = Do not lose an instant on the way.

An. *Je m'en moque comme de l'an quarante* = I don't care a straw for it.

[There was a superstition that the world would come to an end in 1040; after it had passed, this saying arose. The French also say 'Je m'en moque comme de Colin-tampon.' Colin-tampon is the onomatopœic name given to the Swiss roll of the drum; and as the other soldiers in the French army paid no attention to it out of jealousy and *esprit de corps*, this saying arose. Another variant is 'Je m'en soucie autant qu'un poisson d'une pomme.' See *Œil.*]

Bon an, mal an = One year with another; On an average.

Âne. *Ressembler à l'âne de Buridan* = Not to know what to do.

[Jean Buridan was a dialectician of the fourteenth century, and Rector of the University of Paris. One of his most famous dilemmas was that of the donkey equally hungry and thirsty, which was placed halfway between a pail of water and a load of hay. If the animal had no free-will, it would remain motionless between two equal attractions, and so die of hunger and thirst.']

Contes de Peau d'Âne de la Mère l'Oie = Nursery tales.

[A name derived from an old nursery tale adapted by Perrault, in which the heroine is so called.]

Pour un point (or, *Faute d'un point*) *Martin perdit son âne* = For want of a nail the shoe was lost (*or*, the miller lost his mare); Be careful of trifles; A miss is as good as a mile.

[This is said of a person who loses something valuable through a trifle. The Abbey of Asello (Latin *asellus* = little ass) was taken from the Abbot Martin on account of his punctuation of a sentence over the gateway. Instead of: *Porta patens esto, nulli claudaris honesto* (Gate be open, and be closed to no honest man, he punctuated: *Porta pa ens esto nulli, claudaris honesto* (Gate, be open to none, be closed to an honest man). His successor corrected the mistake, and added: *Uno pro puncto*

Âne. (*cont.*) *caruit Martinus Asello.* The English proverb, 'A miss is as good as a mile', is rarely understood. The full form is: 'An inch in a miss is as good as a mile.']

Il fait l'âne pour avoir du son = He simulates stupidity to gain some material advantage; He is a dark horse.

Brider un âne par la queue = To do anything in exactly the wrong manner; To get hold of the wrong end of the stick.

Il n'y a point d'âne plus mal bâté que celui du commun = What is everybody's business is nobody's business.

[Walton, *Compleat Angler*, Part i, chap. ii.]

On ne fait pas (or, *On ne saurait faire*) *boire un âne qui* (or, *s'il*) *n'a pas soif* = One man can take a horse to the pond, but twenty cannot make him drink.

Il y a à la foire plus d'un âne qui s'appelle Martin = There are more Jacks than one.

C'est le coup de pied de l'âne = It is an insult inflicted by a low-minded man on a helpless enemy; That is the unkindest cut of all.

[See La Fontaine, *Fables*, iii. 14.]

Trot d'âne, feu de paille = A donkey's gallop is soon over. (See *Feu.*)

Ange. *Être aux anges* = To be delighted, in raptures, in the seventh heaven.

Un ange bouffi = A chubby child.

Anglais. *Les Anglois s'amusent moult tristement* = The English take their pleasures sadly.

[Although Emerson (*English Traits*, ch. 8) and Hazlitt (*Sketches and Essays*) ascribe this remark to Froissart, it is not to be found in his work. It may be derived from *Reliquiae Hearnianae*, edited by P. Bliss in 1869: 'Anglica gens, optima flens, pessima ridens'; or from the Duc de Sully's *Memoirs*:—'Les Anglais s'amusent tristement selon l'usage de leur pays.']

Anguille. *Échapper comme une anguille* = To be as slippery as an eel.

**Quand on veut trop serrer l'anguille, elle s'échappe* = 'Much would have more and lost all'; He who is too greedy loses everything. (See *Embrasser.*)

Anguille. (*cont.*) *Vouloir rompre l'anguille au genou* = To attempt an impossibility.

Il est comme l'anguille de Melun (more correctly, *Languille de Melun*), *il crie avant qu'on l'écorche* = He is like the eel of Melun, he cries out before he is hurt.

[An actor, called Languille, was once acting the part of St. Bartholomew at Melun, when he was so frightened at the entry of the executioner to flay him alive that he rushed off the stage yelling.]

**Il y a quelque anguille sous roche* = There is a snake in the grass; I can smell a rat.

['Latet anguis in herba.'—VERGIL, *Eclogues*, iii. 93.]

Animal. '*Cet animal est très méchant,*
Quand on l'attaque il se défend' = If you attack this spiteful animal he will defend himself.

[This delicious piece of irony is found in *La Ménagerie*, a song of 1828 by a certain Théodore P. K.]

Anonyme. *Société anonyme* = Limited Liability Company (because the names of the shareholders are unknown to the public).

Anse. *Faire danser l'anse* (or, *le manche*) *du panier* = To make dishonest profits on marketing (of servants); To gain a market-penny.

[When the handle of a basket is violently shaken, the contents are in disorder and look more than they really are. Consequently the crafty servant may pretend she has bought more than she has.]

Faire le pot (or, *panier*) *à deux anses* = To put one's arms akimbo.

[Often said of a gentleman who has a lady on each arm.]

Antan. '*Où sont les neiges d'antan?*' = 'Where are the snows of yester-year?'

[*Antan* is an old French word derived from *ante* and *annus*. The quotation is the refrain of François Villon's famous 'Ballade des Dames du temps jadis'.]

Apache. *C'est un apache* (pop.) = He is a hooligan.

Apothicaire. *C'est un apothicaire sans sucre* = He is unprovided with the necessities of his profession.

[Druggists in France formerly sold sugar, which they used

Apothicaire. (*cont.*) almost in every preparation. Hence one who had no sugar was badly stocked.]

Apôtre. *Faire le bon apôtre* = To put on a saintly look; To pretend to be holy; To play the saint.

['Tout Picard que j'étais, j'étais un bon apôtre
Et je faisais claquer mon fouet tout comme un autre.'
RACINE, *Plaideurs*, i. 1.]

Apparence. *Pour sauver les apparences* = For the sake of appearances.

Selon toute apparence = In all probability.

Appartenir. *À tous ceux qu'il appartiendra* (legal) = To all whom it may concern.

Appât. **C'est un trop vieux poisson pour mordre à l'appât* = He is too old a bird to be caught with chaff.

Appel. *Faire l'appel* = To call the roll.

Manquer à l'appel = To be missing, absent.

Battre l'appel = To call to arms.

Appeler. *Il appelle les choses par leur nom* = He calls a spade a spade.

['J'appelle un chat un chat, et Rolet un fripon.'—BOILEAU, *Satires*, i. 52.
Erasmus said: 'Ficus ficus, ligonem ligonem vocat' = He calls figs figs and a spade a spade. Charles Rolet was a Procureur of the Parlement of Paris, in the reign of Louis XIV, noted for his roguery.]

Voilà ce que j'appelle pleuvoir = This is what I call raining with a vengeance.

Appétit. *Bon appétit* = Good appetite; I hope you will enjoy your meal.

**L'appétit vient en mangeant* = One leg of mutton helps down another; The more one has the more one wants; Begin to eat, you'll soon be hungry.

['As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on.'—*Hamlet*, i. 2.

'L'appétit vient en mangeant, disait Angeston, mais la soif s'en va en buvant.'—RABELAIS, *Gargantua*, i. 5.

'Cibus omnis in illo
Causa cibi est.'
OVID, *Metamorphoses*, viii. 841.

Appétit. (*cont.*) Jacques Amyot, the translator of Plutarch's *Lives* into French, is said to have told the King many times that he would be satisfied with one benefice. When he was given the rich abbey of Bellozane he asked soon after for the bishopric of Auxerre. On Charles IX expressing astonishment at his greed, he replied in the words of the proverb.]

**Il n'est chère que d'appétit* = Hunger is the best sauce.

['Ἡ ἐπιθυμία τοῦ σίτου ὄψον.'—Xenophon, *Cyrop.* i. 5. 12.]

**Pain dérobé réveille appétit* = Stolen joys are sweet.

Qui veut bien se porter demeure sur son appétit = Always get up hungry from table.

Apprendre. *Les malheurs s'apprennent bien vite* = Ill news flies fast (*or*, apace).

['For evil news rides post, while good news baits.'
Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 1538.]

Vous apprendrez avec plaisir . . . = You will be glad to hear . . .

**Ce n'est pas à un vieux singe qu'on apprend à faire des grimaces* (fam.) = One does not teach one's grandmother to suck eggs. (See *Remontrer.*)

[The Greek equivalent was, 'To teach an eagle to fly', or 'To teach a dolphin to swim.'—Zenob. ii. 49.
The Romans said, 'Sus Minervam docet', or 'Piscem natare doces'. *Cf.* Cicero, *De Oratore*, ii. 57.
German: 'Das Ei will klüger sein als die Henne.']

Apprenti. **Apprenti n'est pas maître* = One must not expect from a beginner the talent of an old hand; You must spoil before you spin.

Appui. *Mur à hauteur d'appui* = A wall breast-high (so that one may lean against it).

Faites la proposition, j'irai à l'appui de la boule = You make the proposal, and I will support it.

[This idiom comes from the game of bowls, when by hitting your partner's ball you may drive it nearer the jack (= *cochonnet*), though unable to approach yourself.]

Appuyer. *Vous vous appuyez sur un roseau* = You are trusting to a broken reed.

Après. **Après lui il faut tirer l'échelle* = One cannot do

Après. (*cont.*) better than he has; No one can come up to him in that; That takes the cake.

[Comp. Molière, *Médecin malgré lui*, ii. 1.]

**Jeter le manche après la cognée* = To throw the helve after the hatchet; To give up in despair.

**Après nous le déluge* = A short life and a merry one; We need not bother about what will happen after we are gone.

[These words were attributed to Madame de Pompadour (1721–64), who uttered them to cheer up Louis XV after the battle of Rossbach (1757)—'When I am gone, the deluge may come for all I care.' (See Desprez, *Essai sur la Marquise de Pompadour*, a preface to his *Mémoires de Madame du Hausset*.) The same idea occurs in the Greek proverb (from *Phrynichus*, Incert. Fab. v. 17) quoted by Cicero (*De Finibus*, iii. 19), ''Εμοῦ θανόντος γαῖα μιχθήτω πυρί.' When this proverb was repeated to Nero, he replied: 'Εμοῦ ζῶντος = 'Yes, and when I am alive' (Suetonius, *Nero*, xxviii). Milton suggests Tiberius as saying, 'When I die, let the earth be rolled in flames.'—*Reason of Church Government*, i. 5.]

Araignée. *Avoir une araignée dans le* (or, *au*) *plafond* = To have a bee in one's bonnet.

Pattes d'araignée = Long thin handwriting.

Arbre. **Entre l'arbre et l'écorce il ne faut pas mettre le doigt* = One must not interfere in other people's quarrels; Leave family jars severely alone.

[This proverb has been travestied by Molière, who makes Sganarelle say: 'Apprenez que Cicéron dit qu'entre l'arbre et le doigt il ne faut pas mettre l'écorce.'—*Le Médecin malgré lui*, i. 2.]

L'arbre ne tombe pas au premier coup = Everything requires time and exertion; Rome was not built in a day.

Quand l'arbre est tombé tout le monde court aux branches = When the tree falls every one goeth to it with his hatchet; When a man is ruined every one takes advantage of him.

Il s'est toujours tenu au gros de l'arbre = He has always sided with the stronger side.

Arc. *Débander l'arc ne guérit pas la plaie* = To cease doing mischief does not undo the harm one has done.

Arçon. *Être ferme sur les arçons* = (lit.) To have a firm

Arçon. (*cont.*) seat in the saddle; (fig.) Not to waver in one's principles.

Il a vidé les arçons = He was unhorsed.

Argent. *L'argent est un bon passe-partout* = Gold goes in at any gate except heaven.

['Amour fait moult,
Mais argent fait tout.'

Also: *L'argent a droit partout* = Money masters all things.]

Être cousu d'argent = To be made of money; To be rolling in riches.

[Also: *Être cossu*, which means one has *cosses* = pods of beans and peas.]

Il est charge d'argent comme un crapaud de plumes = He is penniless.

Y aller bon jeu, bon argent = To set about a thing in earnest.

**Point d'argent, point de Suisse* = No money, no Swiss; No pay, no piper.

[In the Middle Ages the Swiss were the chief mercenaries of Europe and occasionally had to resort to severe measures to obtain their pay. Compare Racine, *Plaideurs*, i. 1. One day when the Swiss were asking for their pay from the king the French Prime Minister said: 'The money we have given these Swiss would pave a road from Paris to Basle.' To which the Swiss commander replied: 'And the blood we have shed for France would fill a river from Basle to Paris!']

Payer argent comptant = To pay ready money; To pay in hard cash.

[Synonyms are: *En beaux deniers comptants*, or, *en espèces sonnantes et trébuchantes*.

Note also: *Il a de l'esprit argent comptant* = He is very sharp, very much on the spot. He has a ready wit.]

Prendre quelque chose pour argent comptant = To take something for gospel; To think something true.

Je suis à court d'argent (fam. *à sec*) = I am short of money (*fam.* hard-up, broke).

**Qui n'a pas argent en bourse, ait miel en bouche* = He who has not silver in his purse should have honey on his tongue.

**Argent emprunté porte tristesse* = He who goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing.

[German: 'Borgen macht Sorgen.']

Arme. *Représenter les armes de Bourges* = To look stupid.
[The arms of Bourges are an ass sitting in an armchair.]
Les armes sont journalières = Victory is fickle.

Arracher. *On se l'arrache* = (of persons) He is the rage; (of things) There is a regular scramble for it.

Arracheur. *Mentir comme un arracheur de dents* = To lie unblushingly; To lie like an epitaph; To be a very prince of liars.

Arranger. *Comme vous voilà arrangé!* = What a sight you look!
Je l'ai arrangé de la bonne manière = I gave him what he richly deserved; I told all sorts of tales about him.
Arrangez-vous = That is your business (look-out); Settle it among yourselves; Do it as best you can; Do it in any way you like.

Arrêt. *Mettre un officier aux arrêts* = To put an officer under arrest.
Garder les arrêts = To keep to one's quarters.
Lever les arrêts = To release from arrest.

Arriver. *C'est un homme qui arrivera* = He is sure to get on in the world.
**Un malheur n'arrive jamais seul* = Misfortunes never come singly; It never rains but it pours.
[Also: *Les malheurs vont en troupe.*
Compare:
'When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions.'—*Hamlet*, iv. 5.]
Il en arrivera ce qu'il pourra = Happen what may.
**Cela arrive comme marée en carême* = That comes just in the nick of time (lit. as *sea-fish* in Lent). (See *Carême.*)

Article. *Être à l'article de la mort* (or, *à l'agonie*) = To be at death's door.
[Lat.: 'In articulo mortis.']

Assembler. **Qui se ressemble, s'assemble* = Birds of a feather flock together; Like will to like.

Assembler. (*cont.*) [Note that *qui* here is not the equivalent of *celui qui*, as in *Qui aime bien châtie bien*, but has a collective sense of *Ceux qui.* Compare the expression *Tout vient à point qui sait attendre* where the *qui* = *si l'on.*
Also: *Les grues vont en troupe.*
Lat.: 'Furem fur cognovit et lupum lupus.'
German: 'Gleich und gleich gesellt sich gern.']

Assiette. *Il n'est pas dans son assiette* = He is not in his normal state of mind; He is out of sorts; He is not up to the mark; He is feeling cheap, off colour.
[*Assiette* is here the noun formed from *asseoir* = to seat.]
Son assiette dîne pour lui = He pays for his dinner whether he is present or not.
C'est un casseur d'assiettes = He is a swaggerer (a Mohock, in eighteenth-century parlance).
C'est un pique-assiette = He is a parasite, a sponge.
L'assiette des impôts = The assessment of taxes.
Il a une bonne assiette = He has a good seat (on horseback).

Attache. *Le pauvre homme est toujours* (*comme un chien*) *à l'attache* = The poor man is a very slave, is compelled to work hard and constantly.

Attacher. **Attacher le grelot* = To bell the cat.
[La Fontaine, *Conseil tenu par les rats.* For an explanation of the phrase see *Grelot.*]

Attaquer. **Attaquer le taureau par les cornes* = To seize the bull by the horns.

Atteinte. *Porter atteinte* (*à l'honneur de*) = To sully (the fair name of).
Porter atteinte (*aux droits de*) = To infringe (the rights of).

Atteler. *C'est une charrette mal attelée* = They are a badly-matched pair.

Attendre. *Une question n'attendait pas l'autre* = Question quickly followed after question.
Je n'y attendais = That is just what I expected.
Attendez-vous-y = You may depend upon it; (*or*, ironic) Don't you wish you may get it!
**Tout vient à point à qui sait attendre* = Everything

Attendre. comes to the man who waits; Time and patience (*cont.*) change the mulberry-leaf into a silk gown.

[The older and better form of this proverb is *Tout vient à point qui sait attendre*, where *qui* = *si l'on*. See note on *Assembler*.]

On peut s'attendre à tout, surtout à l'inattendu = One may expect anything, especially the unexpected.

Attraper. *Attrape qui peut!* = Scramble for it!

Attrape! = 1. Catch! 2. Take that! 3. It serves you right.

Audience. *Audience à huis clos* = A case heard *in camera*.

Aune. *Les hommes ne se mesurent pas à l'aune* = Men are not to be judged by their size.

[M. Thiers, who was very short, used to say: 'Les liqueurs précieuses se conservent dans de petits flacons' = Rich goods in small parcels.]

Savoir ce qu'en vaut l'aune = To know a thing to one's cost.

Mesurer les autres à son aune = To measure other people's peck by one's own bushel.

Tout le long de l'aune = By the yard; Plenty of it.

Auner. *Auner quelqu'un à sa toise* = To judge another's peck by one's own bushel; Ill-doers are ill-deemers.

[*Aune* = an ell. *Toise* = a fathom.
'Tuo ex ingenio mores alienos probas.'—PLAUTUS, *Pers.* II. ii. 30.

Aurore. **Travail d'aurore amène l'or* = Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

[The late H. Stacy Marks, R.A., parodied this: 'Early to bed and early to rise, No use—unless you advertise.'
The German equivalent is, 'Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund'—The morning hour has gold in its mouth.
This is also found in Italian: 'Le ore del mattino hanno l'oro in bocca', and 'Chi dorme non prende pesce' = He who sleeps catches no fish.
Again: 'La mattina fa ridere il cuore.'
'Aurora musis amica est.'—ERASMUS, *De Ratione Studii*.]

Aussitôt. *Aussitôt dit, aussitôt fait* = No sooner said than done; Before one could say Jack Robinson.

Aussitôt pris, aussitôt pendu = To make short work of a thing.

Autant. *Cela est fini ou autant vaut* = It is as good as finished.

**Autant de têtes, autant d'avis* = So many men, so many minds.

['Quot homines, tot sententiae.'—TERENCE, *Phormio*, ii. 4. 14. Also: '*Autant de gens, autant de sens.*']

Autant lui en pend au nez (or, *à l'oreille*) = He will get just the same (in bad sense).

Autant vaut être mordu d'un chien que d'une chienne = One evil is as bad as the other.

Autant dire mille francs = We may as well say £40. (See *Aller.*)

Autant vaut celui qui tient que celui qui écorche = The receiver is as bad as the thief.

[A hexameter of Phocylides says:
ἀμφότεροι κλῶπες, καὶ ὁ δεξάμενος καὶ ὁ κλέψας.]

C'est toujours autant de gagné = That's always so much to the good. (See *Prendre.*)

Autant que faire se peut = As far as possible; As far as one can.

Autel. **Qui sert à l'autel doit vivre de l'autel* = Every man must live by his profession.

Il en prendrait sur l'autel = He would rob a church.

Autour. *Tourner autour du pot* = To beat about the bush.

[German: 'Wie die Katze um den Brei laufen.']

Il ne faut pas confondre autour avec alentour = One must not mix up two things entirely different.

[The *gamin* of Paris adds to this saying: '*ni intelligence avec gendarme.*']

Autre. *Comme dit l'autre* = As the saying is.

[Or: *Comme on dit.*]

Nous parlions de choses et d'autres = We were speaking of different things, of one thing and another.

C'est tout un ou tout autre = It is either one thing or the other.

L'un vaut l'autre = One is as bad as the other.

Il en sait bien d'autres = He knows more than one trick.

C'est une autre paire de manches = That is quite

Autre. (*cont.*) another thing; That is a horse of another colour; That is another pair of shoes.

Il n'en fait pas d'autres = That is always the way with him; he is at it again.

Allez conter cela à d'autres = Tell that to the marines; Tell that to others more credulous than I am.

[Often shortened to '*À d'autres.*' Compare: 'Credat Judaeus Apella, non ego.'—HORACE, *Sat.* i. 5. 100.]

Nous autres Anglais sommes très réservés = We English are very reserved.

['Nous autres ignorans estions perdus si ce livre ne nous eust relevés du bourbier.'—MONTAIGNE, *Essais*, ii. 4, speaking of Amyot's translation of Plutarch.]

**Autres temps, autres mœurs* = Manners change with the times.

J'en ai vu bien d'autres = I have outlived worse things than that.

Avaler. *Faire avaler des couleuvres à quelqu'un* = To say very humiliating things to a man who, on account of his inferior position, is obliged to put up with them; To make any one swallow a bitter pill.

Il a avalé sa fourchette = He is as stiff as a poker.

[Also: *Raide comme une barre de fer.*]

Avancer. *Votre montre avance de dix minutes* = Your watch is ten minutes fast.

[Compare: *Votre montre retarde de dix minutes* = Your watch is ten minutes slow.]

Cela m'avance bien! or, *La belle avance!* (ironic) = What good is that to me?

Vous voilà bien avancé! (ironic) = Here you are in a pretty mess! What good have you gained by that?

Je n'en suis pas plus avancé = I am none the wiser (*or*, nearer).

Avant. *Vous allez trop avant* = You are going too far.

Ils sont arrivés bien avant dans la nuit = They arrived very late at night.

Avare. **A père avare enfant prodigue* = A miserly father has a spendthrift son.

['A femme avare galant escroc.'—LA FONTAINE, *Contes*, ii.]

Avec. *Avec ça!* (colloquial) = Nonsense!

[*Avec ça qu'il n'a pas dit du mal de moi* = Can you pretend he has not spoken ill of me?]

Averti. **Un bon averti* (or, *prévenu*) *en vaut deux* = A man well warned is twice a man; Forewarned, forearmed; A word in season is worth many.

[Also: *Qui dit averti dit muni.*]

Aveu. *C'est un homme sans aveu* = He is a vagabond.

[In feudal times a vassal had to make an *avowal* to his lord of the lands he held, placing them under his lord's protection. A man who had no property could not do so.]

**Rien ne soulage comme un aveu sincère* = Open confession is good for the soul.

Aveugle. *Crier comme un aveugle* (*qui a perdu son bâton,* or *son chien*) = To yell with all one's might.

[A variant is: *Crier comme un sourd,* although deaf people generally speak very quietly.]

Avis. *Il est toujours du bon avis* = His opinion is always good.

Il y a jour d'avis = There is no hurry; There is plenty of time for consideration.

**Avis au lecteur* = A note to the reader; A word to the wise; *Verb. sap.*

(*Il*) *m'est avis qu'il cherche à vous tromper* = Somehow I think he wants to deceive you.

**Deux avis valent mieux qu'un* = Two heads are better than one.

[The Greeks said: εἷς ἀνὴρ οὐδεὶς ἀνήρ = One man, no man.]

Sauf avis contraire = Unless I hear (*or,* write) to the contrary.

Aviser. *C'est un avisé compère* = He is a cunning fellow.

On y avisera = We will see to it.

Il ne s'avise jamais de rien = He never thinks of anything; He has no initiative.

On ne s'avise jamais de tout = One never thinks of everything.

Ne vous en avisez pas = You had better not.

Aviser. (*cont.*) **Un fou avise bien un sage* = Good advice often comes whence we do not expect it.

Un verre de vin avise bien un homme = A glass of wine puts wit into a man.

Avoir. [The French use *avoir* frequently where we use *to be*, as in—*Avoir faim, soif, chaud, froid, raison, tort, pitié, honte, peur, soin, besoin* = To be hungry, thirsty, hot, cold, right, wrong, sorry for, ashamed, afraid, careful, in want.]

J'aurai raison de son entêtement = I will master his obstinacy.

J'en ai bien envie = I should like it very much.

Elle n'a pour tout bien que sa beauté = She has nothing but beauty in her favour; Her face is her fortune.

J'en ai pour deux heures = I shall be two hours over it.

J'en ai pour six mois à m'ennuyer = I am looking forward to (*or*, am in for) six months' boredom.

Vous avez la parole = It is your turn to speak.

Vous avez la main = It's your turn to play (at cards).

Vous avez le dé = It's your turn to play (at dice).

Il ne fera cela qu'autant que vous l'aurez pour agréable = He will never think of doing it if you object to it.

Avoir de quoi (pop.) = To be in easy circumstances.

J'ai de quoi payer = I have enough money to pay.

Il y a de quoi = (lit.) There is good reason; (ironic) There is no reason.

Je vous demande pardon. — Il n'y a pas de quoi = I beg your pardon. — Pray do not mention it.

J'ai beau dire, il en fera à sa tête = It is of no use my talking, he will do as he likes. (See *Beau.*)

C'est un homme que j'ai dans la main = He is a man I hold in the hollow of my hand, *i.e.* I can make him do what I like.

Qu'avez-vous? — J'ai que je m'ennuie = What is the matter with you?—The matter is that I am bored to death.

Vous en aurez = You will catch it.

Avoir. (*cont.*) *Contre qui en avez-vous ?* = Against whom have you a grudge ?

Il n'est rien de tel que d'en avoir = There is nothing like money to make one respected.

Quand il n'y en a plus, il y en a encore = The thing is inexhaustible ; It is easy to get more.

Il n'y a qu'à pleuvoir = It may happen to rain ; What if it rains ?

[*Il n'y a qu'à pleuvoir et tous nos projets sont à l'eau* = It has only to rain and all our plans will be spoilt.]

Je vais lui dire cela.—Non, il n'aurait qu'à se fâcher = I will tell him that.—No, don't, he might get angry.

C'est un homme comme il n'y en a point = He is a man who has not his match ; There is no equal to him.

Avril.

En avril
Ne te découvre pas d'un fil
= Change not a clout
Till May be out.

[En mai
Fais ce qu'il te plaît.]

B.

B . . . *Être marqué au b* = To be either hump-backed, one-eyed, lame, or a stutterer.

[i. e. *bossu, borgne, boiteux, ou bègue.*]

Bâcler. *Bâcler son ouvrage* = To do one's work quickly and badly ; To 'polish off' (*or*, scamp) one's work.

[Also : *travailler à dépêche-compagnon.*]

Badiner. *'*On ne badine pas avec l'amour*' = Love is not to be trifled with.

[This is the title of one of Alfred de Musset's *Proverbes.* See *Porte.*]

Bagage. *Quel est le bagage de cet auteur ?* = What works has that author written ? What is that author's output ?

Plier bagage = To pack up and be off.

Bagage. (*cont.*) *Pour tout bagage* = As all assets; All he has done or got.

[e. g. *Il a été fait académicien; et pour tout bagage il avait écrit un roman.* A more familiar expression is *pour tout potage*; e. g. *Il commençait à pleuvoir et pour tout potage je n'avais qu'une canne.*]

Bagatelle. *Bagatelles que tout cela* = That is all stuff and nonsense.

Vive la bagatelle! = Away with care!

Bague. *Cette place est une bague au doigt* = That position is a sinecure.

[*C'est une bague au doigt* is said of any advantageous possession of which one can dispose easily. Quitard derives it from the custom of the seller of land giving to the purchaser as his title a ring on which both had sworn.]

Baguette. *Mener les gens à la baguette* = To rule men with a rod of iron; To be a martinet.

Baiser. *Il y a toujours l'un qui baise et l'autre qui tend la joue* = Love is never exactly reciprocal.

[Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, iv. 5, last line.]

Baisser. *Baisser l'oreille* = To look confused, sheepish.

[From the action of dogs when expecting a beating.]

Ma vue baisse = I am getting short-sighted; My sight is failing.

[In this sense *baisser* means to weaken, and is also used of moral and intellectual qualities, as: *le sens moral a baissé, ma mémoire baisse.*]

Il a donné tête baissée dans le piège (*panneau*) = He ran headlong into the trap.

Je lui ai fait baisser les yeux = I stared him out of countenance.

Il n'a qu'à se baisser pour en prendre = He has only to stoop and pick it up; He has merely to ask for it to get it.

Balai. **Il n'est rien de tel que balai neuf* = A new broom sweeps clean.

On lui a donné du balai = They gave him the sack (*i. e.* dismissed him).

Donner un coup de balai = To make a clean sweep.

Balance. *Faire pencher la balance* = To turn the scale.

Balancer. *Il n'y a pas à balancer* = We must not hesitate, but act.

Balle. *Une balle perdue* = A wasted shot; A useless effort.

Une balle morte = A spent ball.

A vous la balle = It is now your turn to act; It is your innings now.

Renvoyer la balle = To return the compliment.

Prendre la balle au bond = Not to miss an opportunity; To take time by the forelock; To make hay while the sun shines.

[Also: *Prendre l'occasion aux cheveux.*
Quand le bien vient, on doit le prendre. The German form resembles the English: 'Mache Heu wenn die Sonne scheint.' Compare:

'Rem tibi quam nosces aptam dimittere noli;
Fronte capillata post est Occasio calva.'
CATO, *Distichs*, ii. 26.

'Her lockes, that loathly were and hoarie grey,
Grew all afore, and loosely hong unrold,
But all behind was bald, and worne away
That none thereof could ever taken hold.'
SPENSER, *Faerie Queene*, ii. 4, 4.

'Occasion turneth a bald noddle after she hath presented her locks in front and no hold taken.'—BACON, *Essays*, xxi.

'Remember the old adage and make use o't,
Occasion's bald behind.'—MASSINGER, *Guardian*, iv. 1.

'Who lets slip Fortune, her shall ever find,
Occasion once passed by is bald behind.'
COWLEY, *Pyramus and Thisbe.*]

Il s'en acquittera bien, c'est un enfant de la balle = He will do it well, he is his father's son.

[Originally this was applied to children of professional tennis-players, but now to all who follow the profession of their fathers.]

Ballon. *Il lança un ballon d'essai avant de produire son grand ouvrage* = He sent out a feeler before publishing his great work.

Ban. *Le roi convoqua le ban et l'arrière-ban* = The king assembled all his dependants.

[*Le ban* were the king's direct vassals, such as earls, barons, and knights; *l'arrière-ban* were the king's indirect vassals, or the vassals of vassals. 'A proclamation whereby all (except

Ban. (*cont.*) some privileged officers and citizens) that hold their lands of the Crowne are summoned to meet at a certaine place, there to attend the King whithersoever and against whomsoever he goes.'—COTGRAVE.]

Bande. *Faire bande à part* = Not to mix with other people.

[In Parliamentary parlance, 'to form a cave' (of Adullam).]

Banquette. *Jouer devant les banquettes* = (of actors) To play to empty benches.

Barbe. *Se faire la barbe* = To shave.

Rire dans sa barbe = To laugh in one's sleeve.

[See *Cape*. This is used always of men, whereas *rire sous cape* is used chiefly of women.]

Je le lui dirai à sa barbe = I will say it to his face.

Je lui ferai la barbe quand il voudra = I will show him who is master whenever he likes.

En la grande barbe ne git pas le savoir = It is not the learned look that makes the learned man.

A la barbe du pauvre (or, *fou*) *on apprend à raser* = The poor (*or*, foolish) have to put up with the attempts of the inexperienced.

Barre. *Vous arrivez trop tard, la barre est tirée* = You are too late, the line is drawn, the list is closed.

Je ne fais que toucher barres = I am off again immediately.

J'ai barres sur lui = I have an advantage over him; I have the whip-hand (the pull) over him.

[Expressions taken from the game of *barres*, or prisoner's base.]

Bas. **A porte basse passant courbé* = One must bow to circumstances.

Il se retira l'oreille basse = He went away with his tail between his legs, crestfallen.

Les vainqueurs firent main basse sur les biens des habitants = The victors pillaged the town.

Rester chapeau bas = To stand hat in hand.

Il m'a traité de haut en bas = He treated me contemptuously, cavalierly.

Il a la vue basse = He is short-sighted.

[*Il a la vue presbyte* = he is long-sighted.]

Bât. *Vous ne savez pas où le bât le blesse* = You do not know where the shoe pinches him.

['Je sçay mieux où le bas me blesse.'—*Maistre Pierre Pathelin*, l. 1357. *Bât* = pack-saddle. Compare the German: 'Jeder weiss am besten wo ihn der Schuh drückt.' Also: *À chacun son fardeau pèse.*

The phrase first appears in PLUTARCH's *Life of Aemilius Paullus.* A certain Roman having forsaken his wife, her friends fell out with him and asked what fault he found in her; was she not faithful and fair, and had she not borne him many beautiful children? He replied by putting forth his foot and saying: 'Is not this a goodly shoe? Is it not finely made, and is it not new? And yet I dare say there is not one of you can tell where it pinches me.']

Bataille. *C'était une bataille rangée* = It was a pitched battle.

Cet argument est son cheval de bataille = That argument is his stronghold; That is his great argument.

Bataillon. *Inconnu au bataillon* (fam.) = I don't know him; No one knows him.

Bateau. *Arriver en trois bateaux* = To come with great fuss, in great state, with unnecessary ceremony.

[This expression is usually used sarcastically; it originates from great personages or rich merchant-men being accompanied by ships of war. Compare RABELAIS, i, 16, and LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, ix. 3. *Le léopard et le singe qui gagnent de l'argent à la foire.*]

Il est du dernier bateau = He is up to date.

Bâton. *Il travaille à bâtons rompus* = He works by fits and starts, in a desultory fashion.

Conversation à bâtons rompus = Desultory talk.

Il cherchait à nous mettre des bâtons dans les roues = He tried to put a spoke in our wheel.

Le tour du bâton = Perquisites, illicit profits.

Ce sera mon bâton de vieillesse = He will be my support (consolation) in my old age.

Une vie de bâtons de chaises = A knockabout life.

[Roger Alexandre in his accurate *Musée de la Conversation* suggests that this phrase may have originated at the time of the balls of Musard in Paris (*circa* 1835) where at the end of a certain waltz fifty chairs were broken at the same moment by the orchestra.]

Battre. *Il lui a battu froid* = He gave him the cold shoulder.

[Comp. 'Maiorum ne quis amicus frigore te feriat.'—HORACE, *Sat.* ii. 1. 61.]

Battre la campagne = 1. (lit.) To scour the country. 2. (fig.) To talk nonsense. 3. (of invalids) To wander, to be delirious. 4. To beat about the bush.

Battre la breloque (*berloque*) = To talk nonsense.

Battre le pavé = 1. To loaf about. 2. To wander about in search for work.

Tout battant neuf = All brand-new.

Battre le chien devant le loup = To pretend to be angry with one person to deceive another.

Avoir les yeux battus = To look tired about the eyes.

La fête battait son plein = The entertainment was at its height.

Battre quelqu'un à plate couture = To beat some one hollow; To wipe the floor with some one.

[Literally, 'to beat some one so hard and thoroughly as to flatten the seams (*coutures*) of his coat.']

**Les battus payent l'amende* = The weakest go to the wall; The losers pay; That is adding insult to injury.

[This was called the custom of Lorris, because in the charter granted to that town Philippe le Bel had enacted that any creditor claiming money from a debtor, but unable to prove his claim, might challenge him to a fight with fists. The beaten combatant had to pay a fine to the lord of the manor.]

L'un bat les buissons et l'autre prend les oiseaux = One does the work and the other reaps the advantage; One man starts the game and another kills it.

[Also: *Tel sème qui ne recueille pas.*
Compare: 'Sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves.'—ap. Donat. Vit. Verg. 17. See OISEAU.]

**Autant vaut bien battu que mal battu* = As well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb; In for a penny, in for a pound; As well eat the Devil as the broth he is boiled in. (See *Chien.*)

Baume. *Je n'ai pas foi dans son baume* = I have no faith in his plan.

Bavette. *Quand les femmes sont ensemble, elles taillent des bavettes à n'en plus finir* = When women get together they indulge in endless gossip.

[When people talk too much they begin to dribble and need a bib, so they have to cut one out first.]

Beau. *Coucher à la belle étoile* = To sleep out of doors, *al fresco*.

Déchirer quelqu'un à belles dents = To criticize some one mercilessly; To tear a person's reputation to shreds.

Il fera beau quand je retournerai chez lui = It will be a very fine day when I go to his house again (i. e. I shall never go).

Voir tout en beau = To see everything through rose-coloured spectacles. (See *Noir* and *Rouge*.)

Faire le beau = (of dogs) to beg.

Il y a beau temps que je ne vous ai (*pas*) *vu* = I have not seen you for many a day; It seems an age since we met.

J'en entends de belles sur votre compte = I hear nice goings-on of you.

Il en a fait de belles = He played nice tricks (*ironic*).

Il vous en conte de belles = He is telling you fine tales; He is taking you in finely.

Vous me la donnez (or, *baillez*) *belle* (ironic) = A pretty tale you are telling me; Aren't you stuffing me up nicely?

Ce que vous proposez est bel et bon, mais je n'en ferai rien = What you propose is all very fine, but I shall do no such thing.

Être dans de beaux draps = To be in a pretty pickle (*ironic*).

Vous l'avez échappé belle = You have had a narrow escape (*or*, shave); It was touch and go with you.

Il a beau parler, il ne me convaincra pas = It is of no use for him to speak, he will not convince me; Let him say what he will, he will not convince me.

Beau. (*cont.*) [The origin of this use of *beau* is obscure. Larousse suggests the origin may be in the idea of having a *fine* field for operations, which will be of no value, as our: 'it is all very fine for me to speak.']

Il recommença de plus belle = He began again worse than ever.

Vous avez beau jeu = 1. (lit.) You have good cards. 2. (fig.) You have the advantage; It is easy for you to do it.

**La belle plume fait le bel oiseau* = Fine feathers make fine birds.

Se mettre au beau = (of the weather) To clear up.

Jouer la belle = To play the rubber (or third game, to see which of the players is conqueror).

**Tout nouveau tout beau* = Everything new is nice; Novelty is a great attraction.

Quand il fait beau, prends ton manteau;
Quand il pleut, fais ce que tu veux.

= Though the sun shines, do not leave your cloak at home.

[German: 'Man muss nicht ohne Mantel gehn,
Scheint die Sonn' auch noch so schön.']

Beaucoup. **Beaucoup de bruit pour rien* = Much ado about nothing.

Beauté. *La beauté ne se mange pas en salade* = Beauty does not fill the larder; Prettiness makes no pottage; Beauty buys no beef.

Bec. *Il m'a tenu le bec dans l'eau* = He kept me in useless suspense.

C'est un homme qui ne se laisse pas passer la plume par le bec = He is a man not easily taken in.

[Clerks bet a newcomer that he cannot write with a pen in his mouth. On his endeavouring to do so, they pull the pen sharply through his lips, thus inking his face. 'Je ne prétends pas qu'on me fasse passer la plume par le bec.'—Molière, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, iii. 6.]

C'est un blanc-bec = He is a beardless boy, greenhorn.

'*Souffrez que je lui montre son bec jaune*' = Allow me to show him he is a silly goose.

Bec. (*cont.*) [Molière, *Le Malade Imaginaire*, iii. 16. *Bec jaune* or *béjaune* means a young inexperienced fellow, and is an allusion to young birds whose beaks are generally yellow.]

Il a bec et ongles = He knows how to defend himself.

Avoir bon bec (fam.) = To be a chatterbox; To speak well; To be able to answer back.

['Il n'est bon bec que de Paris' is the refrain of Villon's 'Ballade des Femmes de Paris.']

Bécasse. *C'est une bécasse* = She is a goose.

Bêcher. *Bêcher quelqu'un* (fam.) = To pick a person to pieces.

Bedeau. *Le bedeau de la paroisse est toujours de l'avis de monsieur le curé* = Never quarrel with your bread and butter.

Béguin. *Il a un béguin pour cette fille* = He has a fancy for (*or*, He is smitten with) that girl.

[*Béguin* is a cap with strings tied under the chin. The phrase may be compared with *être coiffé de quelqu'un*.]

Bénéfice. *Sous* (or, *par*) *bénéfice d'inventaire* = 1. (lit. in a legal sense) Without prejudice. 2. (fig.) Only to a certain point; Conditionally; For what it is worth; With a pinch of salt.

[e. g. *Il faut croire ce conte sous bénéfice d'inventaire.* The origin of the legal phrase arose from the fact that an inheritor is liable for the debts of the deceased only in proportion to his inheritance, which is verified by the inventory. Thus, if the debts are more than the inheritance, a sole heir would decline to inherit at all.

Compare:

'Un païen, qui sentait quelque peu le fagot
Et qui croyait en Dieu, pour user de ce mot,
Par bénéfice d'inventaire.'

La Fontaine, *Fables*, iv. 19.]

Il faut prendre le bénéfice avec les charges = One must take the rough with the smooth.

Cela retire tout le bénéfice de l'affaire = That takes all the gilt off the gingerbread, all the profit of the deal.

Bercer. *J'ai été bercé de cela* = I have heard that from my cradle.

Berger. *Bon berger tond, mais n'écorche pas* = We may use but not abuse our subordinates.

Berlue. *Avoir la berlue* (fam.) = To see things which do not exist; To have a wrong idea of anything.

Besogne. *Aimer la besogne faite* = To hate work; To like to get work over.

Abattre de la besogne = To get through a great deal of work.

Besoin. **On connaît les amis au besoin* = A friend in need is a friend indeed. (See *Ami.*)

**On a souvent besoin d'un plus petit que soi* = A mouse may be of service to a lion.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, ii. 11.]

Bête. **Morte la bête, mort le venin* = Dead dogs cannot bite; Dead men tell no tales.

[Bertrand Barère is reported to have said: 'Il n'y a que les morts qui ne reviennent pas' when he was president of the court at the trial of Louis XVI and voted for the death of that monarch. He denied that he used these words on that occasion (*vide* my translation of his Memoirs, vol. i, p. 14), having said them with reference to the calamities of the war. For when General Houchard had spared some English soldiers at the Battle of Hondschoote these same men grossly insulted the French officers after the capture of Valenciennes. But the phrase is much older than Barère. Henri III used it to his mother, Catherine de Médicis, after the murder of the Duc de Guise in 1588.]

Cet homme est ma bête noire (*mon cauchemar*) = That man is my pet aversion; I hate the very sight of that man.

Pas si bête = Not so green, foolish.

Il est bête à manger du foin = He is a perfect idiot.

[Also: *bête comme (un) chou, une oie, un pot, une cruche.*]

**Qui se fait bête, le loup le mange* = If one is too confiding, one is imposed upon. (See *Brebis.*)

C'est une bonne bête (or, *la bête du bon Dieu*) = He is a good-natured fellow (not over-clever).

Une bête à bon Dieu (or, *bête à Dieu*) = A ladybird.

Plus fin que lui n'est pas bête = It would take a smart man to deceive him.

Chercher la petite bête = To be too particular; To look too closely into things; To pick holes in a person.

Beurre. **On ne peut manier le beurre qu'on ne se graisse les doigts* = One cannot touch pitch without soiling one's fingers; If you have to do with money, some will stick.

['But I think they that touch pitch will be defiled.'
Much Ado about Nothing, iii. 3.]

Il faut faire son beurre = One must make a profit; One must feather one's nest.

Au prix où est le beurre = As things go.

Cela mettra du beurre dans ses épinards = That will grease the wheels of life for him. (See *Foin.*)

Ça entre comme dans du beurre = (fig.) it is as easy as anything.

Bien. **Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien* = Leave well alone.

['Striving to better oft we mar what's well.'
King Lear, i. 4.]

Grand bien vous fasse = Much good may it do you.

Le navire a péri corps et biens = The ship went down with all hands on board.

Il a du bien au soleil = He has landed property.

Ils sont séparés de corps et de biens = They have had a judicial separation (*a mensa et toro*).

Tout va bien = It is all right.

C'est bien fait = It serves you (him, her) right.

C'est bien lui = That's he all over.

On y est très bien = The accommodation there is very good; They do you very well there.

Je suis très bien ici = I am quite comfortable here.

**Qui est bien, qu'il s'y tienne* = Rest content where thou art; Better dry bread at home than roast meat abroad.

Cet homme est très bien = He is a gentleman.

Mener une entreprise à bien = To bring an affair to a successful issue.

Il est sur son bien-dire = He is on his best behaviour; He minds his p's and q's.

Nous voilà bien (ironic.) = Here is a nice state of things; Here's a pretty mess.

Bien. (*cont.*)

Il ne faut attendre son bien que de soi-même = Always rely on yourself.

Le bien lui vient en dormant = He becomes rich without any trouble.

[This proverb has reference to the work of fishermen, who lay down their lines at sundown and often reap a rich harvest in the morning. For the tale of Louis XI giving a benefice to a sleeping clerk, see King's *Classical and Foreign Quotations*, 3rd edition, p. 1.]

On reprend son bien où on le trouve = One takes one's property wherever one finds it.

[Molière, on being reproached with taking two scenes from *Le Pédant Joué* of Cyrano de Bergerac to use in his *Fourberies de Scapin*, replied in these words, thus suggesting that he had supplied Cyrano with the ideas for them. Others represent him as saying:—'*Je prends mon bien*,' &c., meaning that he got his ideas where he could, that all was fish that came to his net. See *Galère*.]

Tant bien que mal = So-so; Neither well nor ill; After a fashion; As well as I could. (See *Tant*.)

Bientôt. *Cela est bientôt dit* = That is easier said than done.

Bière. *Ce n'est pas de la petite bière* = It is no easy matter.

Bile. *Ne pas se faire de bile* (fam.) = To take things easily; Not to worry. (See *Faire*.)

Billet. *Un billet de faire part* = A letter by which a birth, marriage, or death is made known to friends.

[Cards are used in England for marriages and deaths.]

Un billet doux = a love-letter.

**Ah! le bon billet qu'a La Châtre* = Promises are like pie-crust, made to be broken.

[The Marquis de la Châtre was the lover of the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos (1616-1706). When he was obliged to go off to the wars he made her write him a letter promising to remain faithful to him. On taking another lover she remembered the letter she had written, and uttered these words, which have become proverbial for any worthless promise. See St. Simon's *Memoirs*, vol. xiii, chap. 151.]

Blanc. *J'ai passé une nuit blanche* = I have not slept a wink all night.

[A white night in northern latitudes is one in which the dawn follows quickly on the sunset. Hence a night during which one sleeps little.]

Blanc. (*cont.*) *Dire tantôt blanc, tantôt noir* = To say first one thing and then another.

Faire blanc de son épée = To brag about one's courage or credit in order to succeed in an undertaking.

Se manger le blanc des yeux = To have a furious quarrel.

**Rouge le soir et blanc le matin,*
C'est la journée du pèlerin =
Red at night is the shepherd's delight,
Red in the morning, the shepherd's warning.
Evening red and morning gray
Are two sure signs of a fine day.

Blé. *Manger son blé en herbe* = To anticipate one's revenue.

Bleu. *J'en suis tout bleu* (fam.) = Well! I *am* surprised.

Bloc. *En bloc* = In the mass, in the lump.

Bœuf. *Vieux bœuf, sillon droit* = An old hand knows his work best. (See *Chasse.*)

Il faut labourer avec les bœufs qu'on a = One must do the best with the brains (*or,* tools) that one has.

Boire. *Plus il boit, plus il a soif* = Ever drunk, ever dry.

**Qui a bu n'a point de secrets* = When wine sinks, words swim; *In vino veritas;* Drink washes off the daub and discovers the man; What the sober man has in his heart, the drunkard has on his lips.

['La vérité sort mieux d'un tonneau que d'un puits.'
AUGIER, *L'Aventurière,* ii. 4.]

**Le vin est tiré, il faut le boire* = You have gone too far now to draw back; In for a penny, in for a pound.

[At the siege of Douai in 1667 Louis XIV found himself unexpectedly under a heavy cannonade from the besieged city. In compliance with the entreaties of those around him, who urged him not to risk so important a life, he was about to retire in a somewhat unsoldierly and unkingly fashion, when M. de Charost rode up and whispered this proverb in his ear. The king remained exposed to the fire of the enemy for a suitable time and held in higher honour the counsellor who had saved

Boire. (*cont.*)

him from an unseemly retreat.—TRENCH. 'Le vin est tiré, Monsieur, il faut le boire' is a line in REGNARD'S *Joueur*, iii. 2. The proverb, however, is considerably older than either of these dates.]

Ce n'est pas la mer à boire = That is no very difficult matter.

Il boit du lait (fam.) = He is satisfied, happy.

**Qui a bu boira* = Habit is second nature; If you take to the habit of drinking you cannot get rid of it.

['Et quiconque a joué, toujours joue et jouera.'—REGNARD, *Le Joueur*, iv. 1. Montaigne (*Essais*, iii. 10) says: 'L'accoutumance est une seconde nature.'

'Chacun a un défaut où toujours il revient:
Honte ni peur n'y remédie.'

LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, iii. 7.]

Boire comme un trou (*une éponge, un Polonais, un tonneau*) = To drink like a fish, like a lord.

['Je ne boy en plus qu'une esponge, je boy comme un templier.'—RABELAIS, *Gargantua*, i. 5. Templars were supposed to drink hard because they were a rich order.]

Boire un bouillon = (lit.) To swallow water (when swimming); (fig.) To swallow a bitter pill; To lose a lot of money.

Il a bu l'eau de la Garonne = He is a braggart (as Gascons are apt to be).

Boire sec = To drink hard; To drink wine neat (without adding water).

Boire le calice jusqu'à la lie = To drink the cup to the dregs.

Il boirait la mer et ses poissons = Nothing can assuage his thirst; He would drink the sea dry.

Croyez cela et buvez de l'eau (fam.) = Do not believe that, I know it is not true; Surely you are not simple enough to believe that!

[This means that the fact is difficult to digest and will need a lot of water to wash it down.]

**Qui fait la faute la boit* = As you have brewed, so you must drink; As you have sown, so you must reap; As you make your bed, so you must lie on it.

Boire à tire-larigot = To drink excessively.

[The origin of this expression is obscure. Larousse gives the following explanation, adding that it was probably invented to

Boire. (*cont.*) explain the saying, as it can be found in no ancient author. 'Odo Rigaud was formerly Archbishop of Rouen, and in celebration of his appointment he had a huge bell cast for his cathedral in 1282. This bell was called after him *la Rigaud*. After ringing this bell, the bellringers required much wine to refresh them; hence *boire à tire-larigot*, or *la Rigaud*, meant to drink like one who has been ringing a heavy bell.' Littré favours the derivation from *larigot*, or *arigot*, a little flute, and then the expression would be analogous to *flûter*, a popular word for *boire*. But probably the correct explanation is that of Sainte-Palaye, who says that a later meaning of *arigot* was the *tap* of a cask, so that, this being pulled out, one could drink more without any delay.]

Bois. *On verra de quel bois je me chauffe* = They will see what stuff (*or*, metal) I am made of.

Faire flèche de tout bois = To use every means to accomplish an end; To leave no stone unturned.

Il ne savait plus de quel bois faire flèche = He did not know which way to turn. (See *Saint* and *Pied*.)

Il est du bois dont on fait les flûtes = He is of an easy, pliable disposition (i. e. like the flexible reeds of which flutes were originally made).

Nous avons trouvé visage de bois = We found nobody at home; 'We found the oak sported.'

**Le bois tortu fait le feu droit* = The end justifies the means.

**Bois tordu ne se redresse pas* = An evil habit is rarely eradicated.

Boiteux. **Il ne faut pas clocher devant les boiteux* = One must not remind people of their infirmities. (See *Corde*.)

**À un boiteux femme qui cloche* = Like will to like; Marry among your own class. (See *Pot*.)

Bombarder. *Il vient d'être bombardé membre de ce club* = He has just been pitchforked into that club (over the heads of more deserving people).

Bombe. *Ça y est, la bombe va éclater* = Now the fat is in the fire.

Bon. *Il la fait courte et bonne* = He is having a short life and a merry one.

**À quelque chose malheur est bon* = It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

Bon. (*cont.*)

Dites-moi une bonne fois pourquoi vous êtes mécontent = Tell me once and for all why you are dissatisfied.

À quoi bon lui dire cela? = What is the good of telling him that?

À la bonne heure! = 1. Well done! 2. That is something like! 3. At last! 4. Capital!

Il n'est pas bon à jeter aux chiens = He is good for nothing.

Il a bon pied, bon œil = He is sound, wind and limb; He is hale and hearty.

Faire bonne mine à mauvais jeu = To put a good face on misfortune; To make the best of a bad job. [Also: *Faire contre fortune bon cœur.*]

**À bon jour bonne œuvre* = The better the day, the better the deed.

Tout lui est bon = All is fish that comes to his net; He is not difficult to please.

Si bon vous semble = If you think fit.

**Les bons comptes font les bons amis* = Short reckonings make long friends.

**À bon vin point d'enseigne* = Good wine needs no bush. (See *Vin.*)

Une bonne fuite vaut mieux qu'une mauvaise attente = Discretion is the better part of valour. (See *Fuite.*)

En voilà une bonne! (i. e. *plaisanterie*); *Elle est bonne, celle-là!* = Oh! what a good joke. 'What a cram!' That's rather a tall story.

Est-ce qu'il est parti pour tout de bon? = Has he gone for good and all?

**Bon avocat mauvais voisin* = It is not advantageous to have a lawyer as a neighbour.

Bond.

Faire faux bond = 1. To deceive (by not carrying out one's promise). 2. To fail to keep an appointment.

Il ne va que par sauts et par bonds = He only works by fits and starts.

Tant de bond que de volée = By hook or by crook.

Bond. (*cont.*) *Il l'a fait entre bond et volée* = He did it at a lucky moment.

Bonheur. *Au petit bonheur!* = I will chance it!

C'est écrit au petit bonheur = It is written anyhow.

Vous répondez au petit bonheur = You answer without thinking.

Par bonheur = As luck would have it.

Par un coup de bonheur = By a lucky chance.

'*Le bonheur semble fait pour être partagé*' =

'All who joy would win must share it;
Happiness was born a twin.'

[The French is a quotation from Racine's *Esther*, the English from Byron's *Don Juan*, xi. 172.]

Bonhomme. *Petit bonhomme vit encore* = There's life in the old dog yet.

[An expression derived from an old game which was thus played in France: The children stand in a ring; one lights a spill of paper which he passes on to the next, saying: 'Petit bonhomme vit encore.' This is passed on round the ring, each saying the words and giving over the paper as quickly as may be, for the one in whose hands the spill goes out has to pay a forfeit, and then it is said: 'Petit bonhomme est mort.'—E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*.]

Boniment. *Faiseur de boniment* (pop.) = A cheap-jack, claptrap speaker.

[*Bonir* = to talk like clowns at a fair.]

Bonjour. *C'est simple comme bonjour* = It is as easy as kiss your hand; It is as easy as pat.

Bonnet. **C'est bonnet blanc et blanc bonnet* = It is six of one and half-a-dozen of the other.

C'est un des gros bonnets (or, *légumes*) *de l'endroit* = He is one of the bigwigs of the place.

Il a la tête près du bonnet = He is quick-tempered, easily ruffled.

Il a mis son bonnet de travers = He is in a bad temper; He got out of bed the wrong side.

[Also: *Il s'est levé du mauvais côté* (or, *pied*).]

Jeter son bonnet par-dessus les moulins (of women) = To throw off all restraint; Not to care a straw

Bonnet (*cont.*) for what people may think of your bad conduct; To take the plunge.

Ce sont deux têtes dans un bonnet = They are hand and glove together.

Être triste (*gai*, ironic) *comme un bonnet de nuit* = To be as dull as ditch-water; To be in the dumps.

[Also: *Gai comme une porte de prison.*]

Il a pris cela sous son bonnet = 1. He invented it. 2. He took it upon himself.

Ses collègues opinent du bonnet = His colleagues agree with what he says (without speaking). (See *Opiner.*)

Borgne. **'Dans le royaume des aveugles les borgnes sont rois'* = Among the blind the one-eyed is king.

[The quotation comes from J. J. Rousseau's *Confessions*, Part i, Bk. v.]

Borne. *Il est planté là comme une borne* = He stands there like a post.

Borner. *Il faut savoir se borner* = One must place limits on one's desires.

['Qui ne sait se borner ne sut jamais écrire.'
Boileau, *Art Poétique*, i. 63.
'Le secret d'ennuyer est celui de tout dire.'
Voltaire, *Sur la nature de l'homme*, 172.]

Bossu. *Rire comme un bossu* = To split one's sides with laughter.

[Although this phrase is usually used with this meaning, it ought to mean 'to laugh maliciously' as hunchbacks have the reputation of doing. 'To laugh boisterously' is better translated *rire à gorge déployée* or *à se désopiler la rate.*]

Botte. *Il a mis du foin dans ses bottes* = He has feathered his nest; He has taken care of number one. (See *Pelote.*)

Il est haut comme ma botte = He is a mere sixpenny-worth of halfpence; He is very short.

À propos de bottes = With reference to nothing in particular; Irrelevantly.

[The whole phrase was: *À propos de bottes combien l'aune de fagots?* which makes complete nonsense as faggots are not boots and neither are sold by the ell.]

Bouc. *C'est le bouc émissaire* = He is the scapegoat.

Bouche. *Faire la bouche en cœur* = To try and look amiable; To put on a captivating look; To purse up one's lips.

Cet argument me ferma la bouche = That argument was a poser for me; I could not reply to that.

Il y en avait à bouche que veux-tu = There was a plentiful supply of it.

Je garde cela pour la bonne bouche = I am keeping that for the last.

[*Une bonne bouche* = A tit-bit.]

Il prend sur sa bouche pour aider ces gens = He stints himself to help those people.

Faire la petite bouche = To be dainty; To have a small appetite; To be hard to please.

Bouche close (*cousue*)*!* = Not a word, mind! 'Mum's the word.'

La bouche fendue jusqu'aux oreilles = A mouth stretching from ear to ear.

Être sur sa bouche = To be an epicure.

Bouche de miel, bouche de fiel = Flatterers are always envious.

[German: 'Schmeichler, Heuchler.']

Bouchée. *Mettre les bouchées doubles* = To eat quickly; To hurry.

Boule. *Perdre la boule* (pop.) = To lose one's head; Not to know what one is doing. (See *Tramontane.*)

Bourgeois. *Les officiers étaient en bourgeois* (or, *en civil*) = The officers were in plain clothes, in mufti.

Elle fait une bonne cuisine bourgeoise = She is a good plain cook.

Je prends mes repas dans une pension bourgeoise = I board at a private boarding-house.

Épater le bourgeois = To startle the worthy middle-class citizen.

[A phrase that began to be used by realistic writers and artists at the time of Gustave Flaubert. Larousse quotes Privat d'Anglemont (who wrote *Paris Inconnu* and *Paris Anecdote* about 1860) as saying:

'Je les ai épatés, les bourgeois.']

Bourse. **Selon ta bourse gouverne ta bouche* = Cut your coat according to your cloth.

['Fond pride of dress is sure a very curse;
Ere fancy you consult, consult your purse.'
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.]

Faire bon marché de sa bourse = To say a thing has cost less than it has.

Obtenir une bourse au lycée = To gain an exhibition (*or*, scholarship) at a public school.

Avoir toujours la bourse à la main = To have always one's hand in one's pocket.

Loger le diable dans sa bourse = To be penniless, hard up, in Queer Street.

[Coins generally had a cross on them, which was a protection against the devil. Compare GOLDSMITH, *Vicar of Wakefield*, XXI: 'We have not seen the cross of her money.' But the true explanation is that of St. Gelais, quoted by Littré, that a conjurer once promised to show an audience the devil. He opened a purse before them and showed it was empty.

'Et c'est, dit-il, le diable, oyez-vous bien:
Qu'ouvrir sa bourse et ne voir rien dedans.'

More modern and popular equivalents are *être dans une dèche noire, être dans la purée.* See *Diable* and *Sec.*]

Ami jusqu'à la bourse = A lukewarm friend.

Sans bourse délier = Without any expense.

Bout. *Il tira à bout portant* = He fired point-blank.

**Au bout de l'aune faut* (or, *manque*) *le drap* = There is an end to everything; The last straw breaks the camel's back.

Il est économe de bouts de chandelle = He is penny-wise and pound-foolish.

[Or, *Il fait des économies de bouts de chandelle.*]

Il a ri du bout des lèvres = He laughed in a forced manner; He smiled a sickly smile.

Il est poète jusqu'au bout des ongles = He is a poet to his finger-tips.

J'irai jusqu'au bout = I shall never give up.

[Georges Clemenceau in the Great War was a jusquauboutiste.]

Je suis à bout de force = I am exhausted, done up.

C'est le bout du monde = That is the utmost.

Bout. (*cont.*) *Être au bout de son rouleau, de son latin, de sa gamme* = To be at one's wits' end; Not to know what to do.

Il répète la même chose à tout bout de champ = He repeats the same thing every instant, every time he has the chance.

Eh bien! au bout du compte vous avez tort = Well! you are wrong, after all.

Ma patience est à bout = My patience is exhausted, at an end.

Il m'a poussé à bout = He provoked me beyond endurance.

Laisser voir le bout de l'oreille = To show one's ignorance (*or*, true character); To show what one is driving at; To show the cloven hoof.

[A reference to the fable of the ass in the lion's skin.]

Tenir le haut (or, *bon*) *bout* = To have the whip hand; To be on the right side of the hedge.

Boute-en-train. *C'est un vrai boute-en-train* = He is the very life and soul (*or* ringleader, leading spirit) of the party.

Bouteille. *Il n'a rien vu que par le trou d'une bouteille* = He has seen nothing of the world.

C'est la bouteille à l'encre que cette affaire = This is a very obscure matter; That affair is as clear as mud.

Boutique. *Toute la boutique* (pop.) = The whole show (i. e. a thing and everything connected with it); The whole boiling; The whole bag of tricks.

[Also: *tout le tremblement, tout le saint frusquin*, and *le diable et son train.*]

Braise. **Tomber de la poêle dans la braise* = To fall out of the frying-pan into the fire. (See *Fièvre.*)

Passer sur une chose comme un chat sur la braise = To pass lightly over a subject.

Branche. *Être comme l'oiseau sur la branche* = To be very unsettled.

[This generally refers to a man's position in life, whether he will stay where he is or be made to leave.]

Branler. **Tout ce qui branle ne tombe pas* = A creaking gate hangs long; Threatened men live long.

Bras. *Bras dessus bras dessous* = Arm in arm.

J'ai les bras rompus = My arms are tired.

Cette perte nous coupe bras et jambes = This loss cripples us entirely.

Les bras me tombent de surprise (or, *m'en tombent*) = I am struck dumb with surprise.

Il a le bras long = He has great influence.

**Si vous lui en donnez long comme le doigt, il en prendra long comme le bras* = Give him an inch, he will take an ell.

['Laissez leur prendre un pied chez vous,
Ils en auront bientôt pris quatre.'
LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, ii. 7.

German: 'Wer sich auf den Achseln sitzen lässt, dem sitzt man nachher auf dem Kopfe' = Who lets one sit on his shoulders shall have him presently sit on his head.

Italian: 'Se ti lasci metter in spalla il vitello, quindi a poco ti metteran la vacca' = If thou suffer a calf to be laid on thee, within a little they'll clap on the cow.]

Je l'ai saisi à bras le corps = I seized him round the waist (in a struggle).

Je l'ai battu à tour de bras (or, *à bras raccourci*) = I beat him with all my might.

Pourquoi restez-vous là les bras croisés? = Why are you waiting there doing nothing?

J'ai ses enfants sur les bras = I have his children on my hands.

Brebis. **À brebis tondue Dieu mesure le vent* = God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

[Also: *Dieu donne le froid selon le drap.* This is said to occur first in a collection of proverbs made by Henri Estienne (Stephanus), 1594. The earliest mention in English is supposed to be in Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*. But 'To a close shorne sheep God gives wind by measure' is to be found in George Herbert's *Jacula Prudentium*, 1651.]

**Qui se fait brebis, le loup le mange* = He who is too confiding is imposed upon; Daub yourself with honey and you'll be covered with flies.

[German: 'Allzugut ist dumm.']

Brebis. (*cont.*) **Brebis comptées le loup les mange* = Counting one's chickens will not keep the fox off; If you count your chickens, harm will happen to them; Worry about your sheep and the wolf will worry them.

[Compare VERGIL, *Ecl.* vii. 52. This somewhat difficult expression can also be translated: 'A bold thief is not frightened at things being counted.' It no doubt refers to the old superstition that counting one's possessions was followed by misfortune, as in 2 Samuel xxiv.]

**Brebis qui bêle perd sa goulee* = It is the silent sow that sucks the wash.

La brebis galeuse = The black sheep.

Il ne faut qu'une brebis galeuse pour infecter tout le troupeau = One scabby sheep will taint the whole flock; One ill weed mars a whole pot of pottage.

[Also: *Pomme pourrie gâte sa compagnie* = One rotten apple spoils the whole basket.

'Sicut grex totus in agris
unius scabie cadit.'

JUVENAL, ii. 80.]

Bredouille. *Revenir bredouille* = To have made an unsuccessful attempt; To return disappointed; (of sportsmen) To return with an empty bag.

Se coucher bredouille = To go to bed supperless.

Bride. **À cheval donné on ne regarde pas à la bride* = One does not look a gift-horse in the mouth.

[The proverb is as old as the fourth century A. D., for according to Trench it was used by St. Jerome. So it was by Rabelais (i. 2) and Butler in *Hudibras* (1. i. 490).]

Le cheval courait à toute bride (or, *à bride abattue, à fond de train, à fond de charge, à toutes jambes*) = The horse was running at full speed, his hardest.

Je lui ai mis la bride sur le cou = I gave him full liberty.

Vous lui tenez la bride trop haute = You keep him too much under restraint.

Briller. **Tout ce qui brille* (or, *reluit*) *n'est pas or* = All is not gold that glitters.

[Also: *Il ne faut pas toujours se fier à l'enseigne.*

'All that glisters is not gold.'
Merchant of Venice, ii. 7. See *Cage*.]

Brin. *Nous n'avons pas un brin de feu* = We have not got a bit of fire.

C'est un beau brin de fille = She is a fine slip of a girl; She is a bit of all right.

Brisée. *Il court sur mes brisées* = (lit.) He pursues the same game as I do; (fig.) He poaches on my preserves; He takes the wind out of my sails.

[*Brisées* = small branches broken from trees and dropped on the ground to mark the lair or path of a beast.]

Suivre les brisées de quelqu'un = To take a leaf out of some one's book.

Briser. *Brisons là!* = Let us have no more of that; That will do.

Brochette. *Être à la brochette* = 1. To be brought up by hand (of a bird). 2. To be brought up tenderly, with too much care.

Broder. *Je crois que vous brodez* = (fig.) I think you are exaggerating, romancing.

Il brode bien = He is good at drawing the long bow.

Brouillard. *Établir une rente sur les brouillards de la Seine* = To have an income in the clouds (i. e. nothing).

Brouiller. *Est-ce que vous vous êtes brouillés?* = Are you no longer friends?

Il a eu le malheur de se brouiller avec la justice = He was unfortunate enough to fall out with justice (i. e. to be punished by imprisonment, fine, &c.).

Brouter. **Où la chèvre est attachée il faut qu'elle broute* = One must bow to circumstances; One must put up with the inconveniences of one's position if one can get nothing better; One must not expect more from life than life can give; We must take things as we find them.

['Là où la chèvre est liée il faut bien qu'elle y broute.'—Molière, *Le Médecin malgré lui*, iii. 3.]

L'herbe sera bien courte s'il ne trouve à brouter = He would live on nothing; It will go hard if he does not pick up a living.

Bruit. *Faire plus de bruit que de besogne* = To be more fussy than industrious.

Bruit. (*cont.*)

******Grand bruit, petite besogne* = The more hurry, the less speed; Great cry, little wool.

******Qui a bruit de se lever matin peut dormir jusqu'au soir* = A good reputation covers a multitude of sins.

[German: 'Der gute Ruf deckt manchen Fehler.']

Les tonneaux vides sont ceux qui font le plus de bruit = The worst wheel makes the most noise.

'Cela fera du bruit dans Landerneau' = That'll make a pretty fuss in Little Pedlington.

[A quotation from *Les Héritiers* of Alexandre Duval (1796).]

Brûler.

Il s'est brûlé la cervelle = He blew his brains out.

Ils tirèrent sur lui à brûle-pourpoint = They fired at him point-blank (so as to burn his doublet).

Il m'a posé cette question à brûle-pourpoint = He asked me that question quite unexpectedly.

Brûler une station (*une étape*) = To run through a station (*or*, a halting-place) without stopping.

Brûler le pavé = To dash along at full speed, to 'scorch'.

Brûler à petit feu = To wait impatiently, to be on thorns.

[Also: *Être sur des charbons ardents.*]

Cherchez bien, vous brûlez = Search well, you are getting warm.

[Said to children who are looking for a hidden object and are getting near it.]

Nous avons brûlé nos vaisseaux = There is no going back now; We mean to fight to the last; It is neck or nothing; We have cut the painter.

[Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse, on landing in Africa 317 B.C., burnt his vessels in order to force his soldiers to conquer or to die.—Plutarch, and Vergil, *Æneid*, v. 605, 659. William of Normandy (1066) and Cortez (1518) did the same.]

Un acteur qui brûle les planches = An actor who plays with spirit, 'go'.

Brûler la politesse = To behave rudely by leaving a person abruptly.

L'argent lui brûle la poche = Money burns a hole in his pocket; He does not know how to save.

Buisson. **Il n'y a si petit buisson qui ne porte ombre* = There is no man, however humble, who cannot aid (*or*, injure) his superior.

[Also: *Il n'est si petit foyer qui n'ait son tison.*]

Trouver buisson creux = To find the birds flown.

Buse. **On ne saurait faire d'une buse un épervier* = One cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

['Que l'en ne puet fere espervier
En nule guise d'ung busart.'
GUILLAUME DE LORRIS, *Roman de la Rose*, 3839.

Also: *D'un goujat on ne peut pas faire un gentilhomme* = It takes three generations to make a gentleman; and *D'un sac à charbon il ne saurait sortir blanche farine.*

'Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?' JEREMIAH.

'Lavez chien, peignez chien,
Toujours n'est chien que chien.' See *Singe.*]

But. *De but en blanc* = Point-blank; Abruptly.

[Literally: From the firing-place to the target.]

C.

ça. *Ça a sa petite volonté* (fam). = It has a will of its own (in speaking of children, &c.).

C'est toujours ça = That is something, at any rate.

Pas plus que ça? Rien que ça? = Is that all?

[This is generally used ironically: e.g.—Le cocher m'a demandé cent francs pour aller de la Place de la Concorde à Longchamp! — Rien que ça?]

Ça ira = That will get along all right.

[A phrase used by Benjamin Franklin and adopted by the French republicans in 1789 and sung as a refrain to many of their songs.]

Cabinet. *Cet avocat a un bon cabinet* = That barrister has a good practice.

Cachet. *Courir le cachet* = To go from house to house giving private lessons.

[This expression comes from the custom of the master giving to the pupil a number of tickets (called *cachets*) at the first lesson, for which the pupil pays, giving one back at the end of each lesson.]

Cadet. *C'est le cadet de mes soucis* = That is the least of my cares; That is the last thing I worry about.

Cadran. *Il a fait le tour du cadran* = 1. He has slept the clock round. 2. He has worked for twelve hours at a stretch.

Cafard. *Avoir le cafard* (military slang) = To have the hump; To be in the dumps, in the blues.

Cage. **La belle cage ne nourrit pas l'oiseau* = Fine clothes do not fill the stomach; All is not gold that glitters.

Caisse. *Il tient la caisse* = (lit.). He keeps the cash account; (fig). He holds the purse-strings.

Il fait la caisse = He is making up his cash account.

Quel est l'état de votre caisse? = How much cash have you in hand?

Calculateur. *'Il fallait un calculateur, ce fut un danseur qui l'obtint'* = Positions are gained more by favour than by merit.

[This sentence comes from Figaro's long monologue on how he came by his humble employment.—BEAUMARCHAIS, *Mariage de Figaro*, v. 3.]

Cale. *Être à fond de cale* (fam). = To be hard up, at the end of one's resources.

[Also more pop.: *battre la dèche*. See *Sec* and *Argent*.]

Calomnier. *Calomniez! Calomniez! il en restera toujours quelque chose* = If you only throw enough mud, some is sure to stick.

[Compare BEAUMARCHAIS, *Barbier de Séville*, ii. 8. Bacon in his *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (viii. 2) has: 'Audacter calumniare, semper aliquid haeret.']

Campagne. *En rase* (or, *pleine*) *campagne* = In the open country.

Battre la campagne. (See *Battre*.)

Se mettre en campagne = (lit., of an army) To take the field; (fig.) To canvass or look out for a post; To start working.

Camus. *Rendre un homme camus* = to stop a man's mouth; To make a man look small.

Camus. (*cont.*) *Il demeura tout camus* = He had not a word to say for himself; He was 'stumped'.

Canard. *Cette nouvelle n'est qu'un canard* = That story is all humbug.

[*Canard* is an absurd tale mocking the credulity of listeners. Littré derives the word from the phrase *vendre à quelqu'un un canard à moitié* = to half sell a duck to any one, i.e. not to sell it at all, and so, to cheat. *À moitié* was suppressed and *un canard* came to mean a cheat, a sell. Many other explanations are given of this expression.]

Cane. *Faire la cane* = To run away; To show the white feather.

[This expression literally means to bob down, like a duck, to escape being shot. The verb *caner* (= to funk) is more often used now, or the less familiar *caponner*. 'To show the white feather' arises from the fact that white feathers in game-cocks show impurity of breed.]

Capable. *Il prend un air capable* = He puts on a bumptious look.

C'est un homme capable de tout = He is a man that would stick at nothing.

Cape. *Rire sous cape* (or, *sous sa coiffe*) = To laugh in one's sleeve (generally of women). (See *Barbe*.)

N'avoir que la cape et l'épée = To be titled but penniless (generally used of young officers who have nothing but their pay).

Roman de cape et d'épée = A romantic, melodramatic tale (e. g. Dumas, *Les Trois Mousquetaires*).

Caque. **La caque sent toujours le hareng* = What is bred in the bone will never come out of the flesh. (See *Chasser*.)

['You may break, you may shatter the vase, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.'
Moore, *Farewell.*

'Quod nova testa capit in veterata sapit' = What a jar holds when new, it smacks of when old.

Compare:

'Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
testa diu.' Horace, *Epistles* i. 2, 69.

thus translated by Conington:—

'The smell that's first imparted will adhere
To seasoned jars through many an after year';

Caque. (*cont.*) and 'Je ne suis pas la rose, mais j'ai vécu près d'elle', attributed by AbrahamHayward to Benjamin Constant. It is a translation of a phrase in Sa'di's *Gulistan* and occurs in a poem by Edward FitzGerald published for the first time in 'Some New Letters' of FitzGerald edited by F. R. Barton in 1923.]

Dans le métro on est serré comme des harengs en caque = In the tube you are packed like sardines.

Caractère. *Il a le caractère bien fait* = He is always good-tempered.

Il a le caractère mal fait = He cannot take a joke.

On porte partout son caractère = Change of place does not produce change of mind.

['Caelum, non animum, mutant qui trans mare currunt.'
HORACE, *Epistles*, i. 11. 27.]

C'est un sot à vingt-quatre carats = He is an out-and-out fool, an A 1 fool, an unalloyed ass.

['Enfin quoique ignorante à vingt et trois carats.'
LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, vii. 15.

'Fol à vingt et cinq karats dont les vingt et quatre font le tout.'
BONAVENTURE DES PÉRIERS, *Contes*, ii.]

Carême. **Cela arrive comme mars en carême* = That comes regularly, like clockwork, as sure as fate.

**Cela arrive comme marée en carême* = That comes very seasonably, just at the right time.

Une face de carême = A sad, pale, woe-begone face (like that of one who has fasted all Lent).

Prêcher sept ans pour un carême = To do a great deal for little good.

Carpe. *Muet comme une carpe* = As dumb as an oyster.

Bâiller comme une carpe = To yawn one's head off.

Elle fait la carpe pâmée (fam.) = She turns up the whites of her eyes; She pretends to be ill; She looks like a dying duck in a thunderstorm.

[Also: *Faire des yeux de merlan frit.*]

Carré. *Une partie carrée* = A party composed of two ladies and two gentlemen.

C'est une tête carrée = He is an obstinate fellow.

Carreau. *C'est un valet de carreau* = He is a contemptible fellow, a snob.

Carreau. (*cont.*) *Coucher sur le carreau* = To sleep on the floor.

Il l'a laissé sur le carreau = He killed him (*or*, left him for dead on the ground).

Il est resté sur le carreau = He was killed on the spot, left for dead on the ground.

[Formerly the floors of rooms were paved with square tiles or bricks called *carreaux*. Kitchens are still so paved in France, and often ground-floor rooms in the country.]

Carrière. *La carrière ouverte aux talents* = Tools to those who can handle them.

[The former is a saying of Napoleon to O'Meara, his Irish doctor; the latter of Carlyle (*Critical and Misc. Essays*, vi. 35). Compare: 'Tout soldat français porte dans sa giberne le bâton de maréchal', said by Louis XVIII to the students of St. Cyr (*Moniteur*, Aug. 10, 1819).]

Carte. *Battre les cartes* = To shuffle the cards.

Donner les cartes = To deal the cards.

Brouiller les cartes = (fig.) To sow discord.

Elle lui a tiré les cartes = She told his fortune (by cards).

Il a vu le dessous des cartes = He has been behind the scenes; He is in the secret, 'in the know'.

Il y a un dessous de cartes = There is some underhand game here; There is more in this than meets the eye.

Jouer cartes sur table = To play openly; To act frankly.

Donner carte blanche = To give full permission; To grant a person full liberty to act according to his judgement.

Je connais la carte du pays = I know the country well.

C'est un homme qui ne perd pas la carte = He is a man who keeps his wits about him, who has an eye to the main chance.

C'est un château de cartes que cette maison = This is a jerry-built house.

Carton. *Rester dans les cartons* = To be pigeon-holed.

Des objets de carton = (fig.) Gimcrack things.

Cas. *C'est bien le cas de le dire* = One may indeed say so; That's what ought to be said.

Il n'est pas dans le cas de vous nuire = He is not in a position to harm you.

Le cas échéant = In such a case; If such should be the case; If such a thing happened to occur.

C'est le cas ou jamais = It is now or never.

Nous en faisons grand cas = We value it very highly.

Tout mauvais cas est niable = A man may be expected to deny a deed that he knows to be wrong.

Un en-cas = Something prepared in case of need.

[Formerly this was said of a slight meal placed in a bedroom *in case* one should wake in the night and need food. Now it rather refers to anything that can be used *in case* guests arrive unexpectedly. Also of a parasol that can be used as an umbrella *in case* it rains. The latter is more usually called *un en-tout-cas*.]

Casser. *Une noce à tout casser* (pop.) = A rare old jollification.

Vous me cassez la tête avec votre bruit = You split my head with your noise.

Je ne me casse pas la tête avec (or, *pour*) *de telles bagatelles* = I don't worry my head (*or*, rack my brains) over such trifles. (See *Cerveau*.)

Il nous cassait l'encensoir sur le nez = He was smothering us with flatteries.

[To 'incense' any one would be to honour or praise him, but to break the censer against his nose would be overdoing it.]

Les fatigues ont cassé cet homme = Hardships have broken that man down.

J'ai cassé une croûte = I just had a snack; I took the edge off my appetite.

Cet homme casse les vitres = That man speaks out boldly, to bring matters to a crisis; That man does not pick and choose his words.

On ne fait pas d'omelettes sans casser des œufs = Nothing is done without trouble and sacrifice; One cannot embark in speculations without risking the loss of money.

Casser. (*cont.*) [A saying attributed to Napoleon I in defence of the great mortality caused by his wars.
Also: *Il faut casser la noix pour manger le noyau.*]

Payer les pots cassés = To stand the racket.

Se casser le nez = 1. To fall on one's face. 2. To knock up against an obstacle. 3. To fail in an enterprise.

Cataplasme. *C'est comme un cataplasme* (or, *un cautère*) *sur une jambe de bois* = A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse.

Catholique. *Cet individu n'a pas l'air catholique* = That man does not look very trustworthy.

Votre vin est trop catholique = Your wine is too weak (i.e. baptized with water).

Cause. *Il parle en connaissance de cause* = He knows what he is talking about.

Je ne peux pas y aller, et pour cause = I cannot go there, and for a very good reason; I cannot go there, I have my reasons.

J'ai toujours pris fait et cause pour vous = I have always stood up for you, taken up the cudgels in your defence.

Il a eu gain de cause = He gained the day.

Un avocat sans cause = A briefless barrister.

Vous êtes hors de cause = You are not concerned in the matter; This has nothing to do with you.

Caution. *Il est sujet à caution* = He is not to be relied upon.
[*Caution*, meaning 'bail', implies that he cannot be trusted except on bail.]

Cavalerie. *La cavalerie de St. Georges* = English money.
[English sovereigns have a mounted figure of St. George on the reverse. There is also a reference to England subsidizing continental states with money rather than with men during the Napoleonic wars.]

Ce. *À ce que je vois* = As far as I can judge.

Ce que je sais, c'est que c'est un voleur = All I know is that he is a thief.

Sur ce il s'en alla = After that he went away.

Ce que c'est que de nous! = What poor mortals we are!

Ceinture. **Bonne renommée vaut mieux que ceinture dorée* = A good name is better than riches; He who has lost his reputation is a dead man among the living.

[*Ceinture* here refers to the purse which was in, or attached to, the girdle. Another explanation is given by Littré (s. v. *ceinture*). Compare Proverbs xxii. 1: 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches', and

> 'The purest treasure mortal times afford
> Is spotless reputation; that away,
> Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.'
>
> SHAKESPEARE, *Richard II*, i. 1.]

Cela. *C'est parler cela* = That is what I call talking.

C'est ceci, c'est cela = It is sometimes one thing, sometimes another.

Pour ça, non! = Not a bit of it; Certainly not.

Il est comme cela = That is his way.

C'est bien comme cela! = That is just it!

C'est cela même! = That's the very thing!

Pour cela même = For that very reason.

N'est-ce que cela? = Is that all?

Vous croyez que cela se fait comme cela? = You think that that is how things are done?

Cent. *En un mot comme en cent* = Once and for all.

Je vous le donne en cent = I bet you 100 to 1 you will not guess it.

**Cent ans bannière, cent ans civière* = Up to-day, down to-morrow; Every dog has his day.

[*Bannière* is here used as the mark of nobility. Also: *Aujourd'hui chevalier, demain vacher.* German: 'Heute mir, morgen dir.' Latin: 'Hodie mihi, cras tibi.']

Cent ans de chagrin ne paient pas un sou de dettes = Worrying will not pay your debts; Care is no cure.

[German: 'Man sorgt sich wohl alt, aber nicht reich.']

Cerveau. *Ils se creusent le cerveau* = They are racking (*or*, cudgelling) their brains.

Cervelle. *Le scélérat se brûla la cervelle* = The scoundrel blew his brains out.

[Also, more pop., *se faire sauter le caisson.*]

Chacun. **À la cour du roi chacun pour soi* = Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. (See *Sauver.*)

Chacun cherche son semblable = Like will to like. (See *Pot* and *Tel.*)

['Entre gens de même nature
L'amitié se fait et dure,
Mais entre gens de contraire nature
Amour ni amitié ne dure.'

Also: *À chacun sa chacune.*]

Chair. *Cela fait venir la chair de poule* = That makes one's flesh creep; I shudder at the thought.

Je l'ai vu en chair et en os = I saw him in flesh and blood.

Ni chair ni poisson = Neither fish, flesh, nor fowl.

Plus près est la chair que la chemise; La chemise est plus proche que le pourpoint = My relatives are more to me than my friends, and my friends than my acquaintances; Blood is thicker than water.

Chaise. *Être assis entre deux chaises* = To fall between two stools. (See *Chasser.*)

Chambre. *Il y a bien des chambres à louer dans sa tête* = He is an empty-headed fellow.

Chameau. *Rejeter le moucheron et avaler le chameau* = To strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

Champ. *Il est fou à courir les champs* = He is as mad as a March hare.

Nous prendrons la clef des champs = We shall take the key of the street (i. e. run away).

Un rien le met aux champs = A trifle throws him into a passion, bewilders him.

Être aux champs = To be put out, bewildered, angry.

Prendre du champ = To take a run (before a leap); To have room before one (for an effort).

['Ils prirent du champ et coururent l'un sur l'autre avec furie.'
CHATEAUBRIAND, *Dernier des Abencérages*, 185.]

Chance. *Chance vaut mieux que bien jouer* = Luck is better than wit or brains.

Chance. (*cont.*) *Il n'est chance qui ne retourne* = The luck must change.

Chandelle. **A chaque saint sa chandelle* = Honour to whom honour is due; Every lawyer must have his fee.

['Tribuendo suum cuique.'—CICERO, *de Officiis*, i. 5.

'Suum cuique decus posteritas rependit'—TACITUS.

German: 'Ehre, dem Ehre gebührt.' Also: *Qui a été à la peine doit être à l'honneur.*]

Il vous doit une belle (or, *fière*) *chandelle* = He ought to be very grateful to you.

[An allusion to the custom of burning candles before the altars of saints, as a mark of gratitude considered due to them.]

Voir des chandelles (or, *mille chandelles*) = 'To see stars.' (See *Étoile.*)

Donner une chandelle à Dieu et une au diable = To try and keep in with both parties.

**Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle* = The game is not worth the candle; It is not worth while.

[i. e. when the stakes are not sufficient to pay for the candle burnt during the game.

'Et le jeu, comme on dit, n'en vaut pas les chandelles.'

CORNEILLE, *Menteur*, i. 1.]

**C'est une économie de bouts de chandelle* = That is penny-wise and pound-foolish; That is spoiling the ship for a ha'porth (halfpennyworth) of tar; That is a cheeseparing policy.

Brûler la chandelle par les deux bouts = To burn the candle at both ends.

Change. *Donner le change* = To put off the scent, to mislead.

Vous ne me ferez pas prendre le change = You will not impose upon me, put me on the wrong scent.

[Expressions taken from hunting, where the dogs leave the track of the game they have raised, to run on another scent.]

Je lui ai rendu le change = I paid him back in his own coin. (See *Monnaie.*)

Changer. *Changer son cheval borgne contre un aveugle* = To lose in an exchange; To risk losing something definite for an unknown benefit.

Nous avons changé tout cela = We have got rid of all those old-fashioned ideas.

Changer. (*cont.*) [In Molière's comedy, *Le Médecin malgré lui*, Sganarelle pretends to be a doctor and tells Géronte his new theory of the position of the organs of the body. When Géronte suggests that the heart was always supposed to be on the left side, Sganarelle replies: 'Yes, that used to be thought, *mais nous avons changé tout cela !*']

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose = There is nothing new under the sun; The more changes there are, the more does it seem like the old thing over again.

[Ecclesiastes i. 10. The French was the title of a volume of political essays by Alphonse Karr (1875) although he had used the phrase before in *En fumant* (1861, p. 54). Compare the song in *La Fille de Madame Angot* (1872):

'Ce n'était pas la peine
De changer de gouvernement.']

Chanson. *Il en a l'air et la chanson* = He looks it every inch; He has both the appearance and the actuality.

C'est l'air qui fait la chanson = Words depend much on the tone in which they are spoken; It is not so much what you say as the way in which you say it.

Chansons que tout cela = That's all stuff and nonsense, mere idle talk. (See *Bagatelle.*)

Chanter. **Il chante toujours la même chanson* = He is always harping on the same string.

['Cantilenam eandem canere.'—Terence, *Phormio*, iii. 2. 10. 'Chorda qui semper oberrat eadem.'—Horace, *Ars Poet.* 356.]

**Tel chante qui ne rit pas* = The heart may be sad though the face be gay.

C'est comme si je chantais = It is like talking to the air, preaching in the desert.

Je lui ai chanté sa gamme = I lectured him severely.

Une porte mal graissée chante = One must pay well to keep persons quiet.

Elle chante à faire pitié = She sings most wretchedly.

Chanter juste = To sing in tune.

Si ça vous chante (fam.) = If you are in the mood for it.

Chapeau. *Voici la reine, chapeaux bas!* = Here is the Queen, hats off!

Chapelet. *Le chapelet commence à se défiler* = The association is beginning to break up.

Chapelet. (*cont.*) *Défiler* (or, *dire*) *son chapelet* = To say all one has to say.

Il n'a pas gagné cela en disant son chapelet = He did not get that for nothing.

Chapon. **Qui chapon mange, chapon lui vient* = He that has plenty shall have more; Spend and God will send.

Charbon. *Je suis sur les charbons ardents* (*sur les épines*) = I am in a stew; I am on thorns.

Charbonnier. **Charbonnier est maître chez lui* (or, *chez soi*) = Every one is master in his own house; An Englishman's house is his castle.

[In the *Commentaires de Blaise de Monluc, Maréchal de France* (ed. *Alphonse de Ruble, pour la Société de l'Histoire de France*, tome iii, p. 482, Paris, 1867), in a remonstrance to the king he says: 'car chacun est roy en sa maison, comme respondit le charbonnier à votre ayeul.' M. de Ruble appends this note: 'François Ier, à la suite d'une chasse qui l'avait séparé de sa suite, se perdit dans une forêt et chercha un asile dans la cabane d'un charbonnier. L'homme était absent; le roi ne trouva que la charbonnière, s'empara du meilleur siège et demanda à souper. La femme voulut attendre l'arrivée de son mari. À son retour, celui-ci reprit brusquement son siège et offrit un simple escabeau au roi: "Je prendz cette chaise", dit-il, "parce qu'elle est à moi:

Or, par droit et par raison
Chacun est maître en sa maison."

Le roi, charmé de n'être point reconnu, obéit à son hôte. On soupa d'un quartier de chevreuil tué en cachette, on médit du roi, des tailles qu'il venait d'ordonner et surtout de sa sévérité pour la chasse. Le lendemain, François se fit connaître. Le charbonnier se crut perdu, mais le roi le rassura, et, pour prix de son hospitalité, lui accorda de grandes faveurs, entre autres le droit de chasser. À son retour à la cour, il rapporta le récit de son aventure et surtout le proverbe qu'il venait d'apprendre.' Also in *La Belle Arsène, comédie-féerie de C. S. Favart*, acted before the king in 1773, we find this proverb (Act iv, sc. 2).]

Charge. *Cela est à ma charge* = I have to pay for it; That falls on me.

La vie lui est à charge = Life is a burden to him.

C'est entendu, à la charge d'autant (or, *à charge de revanche*) = Agreed! I will do the same for you; One good turn deserves another.

J'en ai ma charge = I have all I can carry.

Charité. **Charité bien ordonnée commence par soi-même* = Charity begins at home.

['Proximus sum egomet mihi.' = I myself am nearest to myself. —TERENCE, *Andria*, iv. 1. 12.]

La charité, s'il vous plaît! = Please give me a penny!

Charlemagne. *Faire Charlemagne* = To leave off a winner, without giving one's adversaries a chance of revenge.

[Genin explains this as a shortened form of *faire comme Charlemagne*, who died without losing any of the conquests he had made.]

Charme. *Il se porte comme un charme* = He has wonderful health.

Charrette. *Mettre la charrette* (or, *charrue*) *devant les bœufs* = To put the cart before the horse.

[Lucian says: ἡ ἅμαξα τὸν βοῦν (ἕλκει) = The wagon drags the ox.]

Mieux vaut être cheval que charrette = Better lead than be led.

Chasse. *Qui va à la chasse perd sa place* = One loses one's place by attending to other things; You are superseded by others if you do not attend to your business.

Il n'est chasse que de vieux chiens = Old hands know their business best. (See *Bœuf.*)

Chasser. *Faire un chassé-croise* = To go to and fro in all directions; To exchange places; To play at 'puss in the corner'.

**'Chassez le naturel, il revient au galop'* = What is bred in the bone will never come out of the flesh.

[DESTOUCHES, *Le Glorieux*, iii. 5. Comp. HORACE, *Ep.* i. 10. 24: 'naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret'; and LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, ii. 18:

'Tant le naturel a de force!
Il se moque de tout . . .
Qu'on lui ferme la porte au nez,
Il reviendra par les fenêtres.'

Frederick the Great wrote to Voltaire (March 19, 1771): 'Chassez les préjugés par la porte, ils reviendront par la fenêtre.'

Also: *Qui naquit chat court après les souris*, and *Le fruit ne tombe jamais loin de l'arbre.* See *Caque.*

'Lupus pilum mutat, non mentem.']

**Qui deux choses chasse, ni l'une ni l'autre ne prend* = Between two stools one falls to the ground.

Chasser. (*cont.*) *Ne chassez pas deux lièvres à la fois* = Do not have too many irons in the fire.

Il chasse de race = He is a chip of the old block; It runs in the blood.

Un clou chasse l'autre = One idea drives away another.

Chat. **À bon chat bon rat* = A Roland for an Oliver; Tit for tat; Diamond cut diamond; They are well matched. (See *Fève* and *Prêter.*)

**Chat échaudé craint l'eau froide* = A burnt child dreads the fire; Once bit, twice shy.

[The Jewish Rabbis said: 'One bitten by a serpent is afraid of a rope's end.'

Hesiod says: 'Even a fool after suffering gets him knowledge'; the Italians: 'Can scottato da l'acqua calda ha paura poi della fredda' = A dog scalded by hot water afterwards fears cold. Compare: 'Tranquillas etiam naufragus horret aquas' (Ovid) = A shipwrecked man fears even calm waters.]

J'appelle un chat un chat = I call a spade a spade. (See *Appeler.*)

Avoir un chat dans la gorge = To have phlegm (*or,* frog) in the throat; To be hoarse.

**Nous avons d'autres chats* (or, *chiens*) *à fouetter* (or, *à peigner*) = We have other fish to fry.

Il n'y a pas là de quoi fouetter un chat = It is not worth getting angry about.

**Ne réveillons pas le chat qui dort* = Let sleeping dogs lie.

[Latin: 'Temulentus dormiens non est excitandus' = Do not arouse the sleeping drunkard.

'Le feu qui semble éteint souvent dort sous la cendre:
Qui l'ose réveiller peut s'en laisser surprendre.'

Corneille, *Rodogune,* iii. 4.]

**Le chat parti, les souris dansent* = When the cat's away the mice will play.

[Also: *Voyage de maîtres, noces de valets.*]

**La nuit tous les chats sont gris* = At night one may easily be mistaken; At night beauty is of no account; When candles are away, all cats are grey.

[Also: *À la chandelle la chèvre semble demoiselle.*
German: 'Bei Nacht sind alle Katzen grau.']

Chat. (*cont.*) **Chat botté n'attrape pas de souris* = A muffled cat catches no mice.

Comme chat sur braise = Like a cat on hot bricks.

Il n'y a pas un chat = There is not a soul.

[Also : *Il n'y a pas âme qui vive.*]

Aller comme un chat maigre = To run like a lamplighter. (See *Verrier.*)

Il n'est si petit chat qui n'égratigne = Tread on a worm and it will turn. (See *Colombe.*)

[German : 'Selbst der Kleinste will mitreden.']

Les chats ont la vie dure = Cats have nine lives.

Château. *Faire des châteaux en Espagne* = To build castles in the air.

[This expression is found from the thirteenth century. The explanation that would ascribe it to the followers of the Duc d'Anjou when he became Philippe V of Spain must therefore be incorrect. The phrases 'Châteaux en Asie, en Albanie' were also used, so that it comes to mean 'to build castles in foreign countries, where one is not', and hence 'to indulge in illusions.'—LITTRÉ, *s. v.*

'Chatiaus en Espagne.'—GUISLAUME DE LORRIS, *Roman de la Rose*, l. 2530.

'De quoi sert-il de bastir des chasteaux en Espagne puisqu'il faut habiter en France?'—*St. François de Sales*, lettre 856.]

Chaud. *Pleurer à chaudes larmes* = To cry bitterly.

**Tomber de fièvre en chaud mal* = To fall out of the frying-pan into the fire. (See *Fièvre.*)

[German : 'Aus dem Regen in die Traufe kommen.']

Cela ne me fait ni froid ni chaud = That is indifferent to me.

Il a les pieds bien chauds = He is in very easy circumstances.

Chaudron. **Petit chaudron, grandes oreilles* = Little pitchers have long ears.

[Also : *Il n'a pas les oreilles dans les poches.*]

Chauffer. *C'est un bain qui chauffe* = There is a shower coming on.

[When it feels close, or when the sun is seen for a few minutes through the clouds, it is looked upon as a sign of rain.]

Ce n'est pas pour vous que le four chauffe = All these preparations are not for you.

Chausser. *Les cordonniers sont les plus mal chaussés* = The shoemaker's wife goes the worst shod.

Chauve. *Chauve comme mon genou* (fam.) = As bald as a coot, as a billiard-ball.

Chef. *Elle a une grande fortune de son chef* = She has a large fortune in her own right.

Faire une chose de son chef = To do a thing on one's own responsibility, of one's own accord.

Chemin. *Chemin faisant* = On the way.

Le chemin de velours = The primrose path (of dalliance).

[*Hamlet*, i. 3.

La Fontaine (*Fables*, x. 14) says: 'Aucun chemin de fleurs ne conduit à la gloire.' With this may be compared:

'Not once nor twice in our rough island story
The path of duty was the way to glory.'

Tennyson, *Ode on Death of Duke of Wellington.*

'Ardua per præceps gloria vadat iter.'

Ovid, *Tristia*, iv. 3. 74.

'Non est ad astra mollis e terris via.'

Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, ii. 437.]

En tout pays il y a une lieue de mauvais chemin = (fig.) In every enterprise difficulties have to be encountered.

Il ne faut pas y aller par quatre chemins = You must not beat about the bush; You must go straight to the point; You must not mince matters; It's no good shilly-shallying.

[Also: *C'est inutile de prendre des gants.*]

**Qui trop se hâte reste en chemin* = The more haste, the less speed; Slow and sure wins the race. (See *Hâte.*)

**Le chemin le plus long est souvent le plus court* = The longest way round often proves to be the shortest; A short cut may be a very long way home.

Prendre le chemin de l'ecole (or, *des écoliers*) = To take the longest way (a roundabout way).

**À chemin battu il ne croît pas d'herbe* = (fig.) There is no profit in an affair in which many are engaged.

Le chemin du ciel est rempli d'épines = No cross, no crown; No sweat, no sweet.

[Latin: 'Via crucis, via lucis.']

Chemin. (*cont.*) *Se frayer un chemin avec les coudes* = To elbow one's way through a crowd.

En long chemin une paille est un fardeau = The lightest weight tires in time.

Cheminée. *Il faut faire une croix à la cheminée* = 'We must chalk it up' (of an event that seldom happens).

Sous le manteau de la cheminée = Secretly, *sub rosa.*

Cheval. **À cheval donné on ne regarde pas à la bride* (or, *à la dent*) = One does not look a gift-horse in the mouth.

[Late Latin: 'Si quis det mannos, ne quaere in dentibus annos.']

On loge à pied et à cheval = Good entertainment (accommodation) for man and beast.

L'œil du maître engraisse le cheval = Matters prosper under the master's eye.

['Il n'est pour voir que l'œil du maître.'
LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, iv. 21.]

Il est aisé d'aller à pied quand on tient son cheval par la bride = It is easy to stoop from state when that state can be resumed at will.

Il n'est si bon cheval qui ne bronche = The best horse may stumble; Accidents will happen; The wisest make mistakes.

[Also: *Il n'est si bon charretier qui ne verse.*]

Il a changé son cheval borgne contre un aveugle = He has changed for the worse; He has made a bad bargain.

Monter sur ses grands chevaux = To ride the high horse.

[A reference to the big war horses used by knights in battle, as distinguished from palfreys used in peace.

'Dessus ses grands chevaux est monté mon courage.'
MOLIÈRE, *Sganarelle*, 21.]

Je lui ai écrit une lettre à cheval = I wrote him a severe letter.

Il est toujours à cheval sur l'étiquette = He is a stickler for etiquette.

Il est bon cheval de trompette = He is not easily dismayed.

Cheval. (*cont.*) *Un cheval à deux fins* = A horse for riding or driving.

J'ai une fièvre de cheval = I am in a high fever.

Nous l'avons cherché à pied et à cheval = We hunted high and low for him.

C'est un vrai cheval à la besogne (or, *à l'ouvrage*) = He is a regular glutton for work.

À méchant cheval bon éperon = A bad worker needs goading on.

Chevalier. *Un chevalier d'industrie* = A swindler, a man who lives by his wits.

Cheveux. *Cette comparaison est tirée par les cheveux* = That comparison is somewhat far-fetched.

On ne peut prendre aux cheveux un homme rasé = One cannot get blood from a stone. (See *Huile.*)

En cheveux (of a woman) = Bareheaded.

[Of a man: *tête nue.*]

Les cheveux en brosse = Hair cut short (standing up like the bristles of a brush).

Prendre l'occasion aux cheveux = To take time by the forelock. (See *Balle.*)

Avoir mal aux cheveux (fam.) = To have a head (i. e. a headache in the morning after a drinking-bout).

Cheville. *Vous ne lui allez pas à la cheville* = You are a pigmy compared with him; You are no match for him at all.

La cheville ouvrière = The mainspring, pivot.

Pour un trou il y a vingt chevilles = There are always more workers than jobs.

Chèvre. **Ménager la chèvre et le chou* = To run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

[The French refers to the tale of the man in charge of a wolf, a goat, and a cabbage. He came to a river which he had to cross; but the ferry-boat was so small that he could only take one of his charges with him. His difficulty was to get them across, for if he left the wolf and goat together the wolf would eat the goat: and if he left the goat with the cabbage the goat would eat it.]

**Où la chèvre est attachée il faut qu'elle broute* = One must put up with the inconveniences of one's position

Chèvre. (*cont.*) if one can get nothing better; We must not expect more from life than life can give us. (See *Brouter.*)

Chez. **Il n'y a pas de petit chez soi* = There is no place like home; 'Home is home, though it be ever so homely' (CLARKE, *Paroemialogia*, 1639); East, west, home is best.

[Also: *Un petit chez soi vaut mieux qu'un grand chez les autres.*

'My house, my house, though thou art small,
Thou art to me the Escuriall.'

GEORGE HERBERT, *Jacula Prudentium.*

German: 'Jedem Vogel gefällt sein Nest.']

Chien. *C'est le chien de Jean de Nivelle, il s'enfuit quand on l'appelle* = The more you call him, the more he runs away, like John de Nivelle's dog.

[Jean de Nivelle was the eldest son of Jean II, Duc de Montmorency, and was born about 1423. Having been summoned to appear before the Judges at Paris for having espoused the cause of the Duke of Burgundy against the wishes of the king, Louis XI, and of his father, who disinherited him, he fled to Flanders, where his wife had property. He therefore became an object of scorn to the people for refusing to answer the summons of his king, and they called him *chien*: the saying ought to run: *C'est* CE *chien de Jean de Nivelle.* La Fontaine evidently thought the phrase referred to a real dog when he wrote:

'Une traîtresse voix bien souvent vous appelle,
Ne vous pressez donc nullement,
Ce n'était pas un sot, non, non, et croyez m'en,
Que le chien de Jean de Nivelle.'

Compare the Italian: 'Far come il can d'Arlotto che chiamato se la batte.']

**Qui veut noyer son chien l'accuse de la rage* = Give your dog a bad name and hang him.

Je jette ma langue aux chiens = I give it up (of riddles, &c.).

[Also: *Je donne ma langue aux chats.*
You throw to the dogs what is of no use. When you cannot answer, your tongue is of no use; therefore it is only good to be thrown to the dogs.]

Nous sommes sortis entre chien et loup = We went out at dusk, between the lights.

[i. e. when you could easily mistake a wolf for a dog; or, as others say, between the time when the watch-dog is let loose and the time when the wolf comes out of the wood.]

Chien. (*cont.*)

Ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans l'homme, c'est le chien = The best points in man's character are those he shares with the dog's.

[A saying of the painter Charlet.]

Un chien regarde bien un évêque = A cat may look at a king.

Il fait un chien de temps (or, *un temps de chien*) (fam.) = It is wretched weather.

Faire un métier de chien = To live a dog's life; To work at a wretched business.

C'est saint Roch et son chien que ces deux personnes-là = These two persons are inseparable, are like David and Jonathan.

[In pictures of saints St. Roch is always accompanied by his dog. He was a native of Montpellier (born about 1285), who devoted his life to nursing the sick. At Piacenza he was attacked by the plague and crawled to a wood to die in peace. His little dog alone kept by him and brought him daily from the city a loaf which was miraculously given him.]

**Bon chien chasse de race* = Like sire, like son; Cat after kind; Breeding tells.

C'est le chien du jardinier qui ne mange pas de choux et n'en laisse pas manger aux autres = He is a dog in the manger.

Écorcher son chien pour en avoir la peau = To sacrifice something important for a small return.

**Chien qui aboie ne mord pas* = His bark is worse than his bite.

[Also: *Tel fiert qui ne tue pas*, and *Chat miauleur ne fut jamais bon chasseur, non plus qu'homme sage caqueteur.*
Compare: Silence grips the mouse.]

**Autant vaut être mordu d'un chien que d'une chienne* = As well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb; What is the use of choosing between two evils?

On l'a reçu comme un chien dans un jeu de quilles = He was as welcome as a dog at a wedding.

**Il ne faut pas se moquer des chiens* (or, *du loup*) *avant qu'on ne soit hors du bois* = Do not holloa before you are out of the wood.

Il n'attache pas ses chiens avec des saucisses = He is a regular miser.

Chien. (*cont.*) *Chien hargneux a toujours l'oreille déchirée* = Quarrelsome folk are always in the wars.

['Brabbling curs never want sore ears.' RAY, *English Proverbs*, 2nd ed., 1678.]

Jamais bon chien n'a rongé bon os = A good dog rarely gets a good bone; Men rarely get their deserts.

Se regarder en chiens de faïence = To look at one another without talking (like stuck pigs).

A méchant chien court lien = Quarrelsome dogs need tying up tightly.

Chiffon. *Nous causions chiffons* (of women) = We were chattering about dress.

Chiffonner. *Elle a une petite mine chiffonnée* = She has irregular features, but her expression is pleasing.

Chômer. **Chômer les fêtes avant qu'elles ne soient venues* = To count one's chickens before they are hatched.

['Laissons venir la fête avant que la chômer.'
MOLIÈRE, *Le Dépit Amoureux*, i. 1.]

C'est un saint qu'on ne chôme point = He is in no great repute.

['L'honneur est un vieux saint que l'on ne chôme plus.'
RÉGNIER, *Satires*, xiii.]

Chose. *Dites bien des choses de ma part à votre frère* = Remember me kindly to your brother.

Rester tout chose = To be confused.

Il était tout chose = He was out of sorts, out of spirits, cast down; He felt cheap, below par, queer.

Monsieur Chose (or, *Machin*) = 'Mr. What's-his-name.'

C'est bien peu de chose = That's a mere trifle.

Chou. *On l'envoya planter ses choux* = He was dismissed, rusticated.

Aller planter ses choux (or, *garder les dindons*) = To retire into the country.

Chou pour chou = Taking one thing with another.

[The whole expression is: *Chou pour chou, Aubervilliers vaut*

Chou. (*cont.*)

bien Paris = Aubervilliers is as good as Paris, if it come to counting cabbages, i. e. each thing has its particular merits. Aubervilliers is a suburb of Paris, noted for its market gardens.]

Bête comme (*un*) *chou* (*un pot, une cruche, une oie*) = As stupid as an owl.

Mon petit chou = My little darling.

[This has nothing to do with a cabbage, but with a kind of puff pastry filled with cream, in the shape of a cabbage.]

Faire ses choux gras d'une chose = To enjoy a thing that others despise.

Ciel. *Remuer ciel et terre* = To move heaven and earth; To leave no stone unturned.

[Also: *Il a heurté à toutes les portes.* See *Employer.*]

Circuler. *Circulez, Messieurs!* = Move on, please! (cry of policemen).

Clair. *Parler clair et net* = To speak plainly.

Je n'y vois pas clair = I cannot see, it is too dark.

Clair comme le jour (or, *comme le soleil en plein midi, comme deux et deux font quatre, comme l'eau de roche*) = As plain as a pikestaff; As clear as noonday; As clear as anything can be.

Classe. *À la rentrée des classes* = When school reopens.

Clef. *Mettre la clef sous la porte* = To run away from one's creditors; 'To bolt'.

La clef dont on se sert est toujours claire = One does not get rusty in what one does every day.

Clerc. *Un pas de clerc* = A blunder; A false step.

Il ne faut pas parler latin devant les clercs = Do not correct a specialist on his subject.

['Les plus grands clercs ne sont pas les plus fins.'
RÉGNIER, *Satires*, iii.

The Spaniards say: 'En casa del Moro no hables algarabía' = In the house of a Moor do not talk Arabic.]

Cliché. *Ses plaisanteries ne sont que des clichés* = His jokes are stereotyped.

Clin. *En un clin d'œil* = In a twinkling; In the twinkling of an eye.

Cloche. **Qui n'entend qu'une cloche n'entend qu'un son* = One should hear both sides of a question; 'Audi alteram partem'.

Il est temps de fondre la cloche = The time for action has arrived.

Déménager à la cloche de bois (fam.) = To shoot the moon; To leave a house without paying one's rent or one's creditors.

Clocher. (subst.) *Il n'a jamais perdu son clocher de vue* = He has never been out of his parish.

Il faut placer le clocher au milieu du village = What is meant for the benefit of all should be within reach of all.

[e. g. a lamp in the middle of the table.]

Avoir la maladie du clocher = To be home-sick.

[Also more often: *Avoir le mal du pays.*]

Clocher. (verb) *Ce n'est pas mal, mais il y a encore quelque chose qui cloche* = It is not bad, but there is still something wrong, there is a hitch (a screw loose) somewhere.

**Toute comparaison cloche* (or, *pèche*) = Comparisons are odious, are never exact.

[Also: *Comparaison n'est pas raison.*
An early occurrence in English is in Lydgate's *Fable of the Horse, circa* 1430.]

Clou. *Cela ne vaut pas un clou à soufflet* = That is not worth a straw (lit. a tin-tack).

Je lui ai rivé son clou (pop.) = I shut his mouth; That was a poser for him.

['Vous avez fort bien fait de lui river son clou.'
REGNARD, *Le Distrait*, iv. 7.]

Un clou chasse l'autre = One idea drives away another; One event makes another forgotten.

['Clavo clavum eiicere.' CICERO, *Tusc. Disputationes*, iv. 35.]

Le clou de l'Exposition = The chief attraction of the Exhibition.

Cocagne. *C'est un pays de cocagne* = It is a land flowing with milk and honey.

['Paris est pour le riche un pays de cocagne;
Sans sortir de la ville il trouve la campagne.'
BOILEAU, *Satires*, vi.

Cocagne. (*cont.*) *Le pays de cocagne* is the title of a fabliau of the Middle Ages, describing a country where the walls of the houses are made of delightful foods, where the rivers run wine and showers of sweets take place daily.]

Le mât de cocagne = The greasy pole.

Coche. *C'est la mouche du coche* = He is a regular busybody; All fuss and no work.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, vii. 9, imitated from Aesop.]

Cochon. *Nous n'avons pas gardé les cochons ensemble* (pop.) = We have not been dragged up together.

[The reply to a man who presumes upon acquaintance and needs putting down.]

Cœur. *À contre-cœur* = Reluctantly.

À cœur joie = To one's heart's content.

De gaieté de cœur = Out of sheer wantonness.

Il l'a fait de bon cœur = He did it willingly.

Dîner par cœur = To go without a dinner; To dine with Duke Humphrey.

[Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, son of Henry IV, was renowned for his hospitality. At his death it was reported that he would have a monument in St. Paul's, but he was buried in St. Alban's Abbey. St. Paul's was at that time the common lounge of the town, and when the promenaders left for dinner those who had no dinner to go to used to say they would stay behind and look for the monument of the Good Duke. A similar saying was, 'To sup with Sir Thomas Gresham', the Exchange, built by him, being a place of resort.]

Vous l'avez blessé au cœur = You have wounded his feelings.

C'est un crève-cœur = It is a heart-rending thing.

**Loin des yeux, loin du cœur* = Out of sight, out of mind.

Il a cela à cœur = 1. He is striving hard to do it. 2. He takes a lively interest in it.

Cela me tient au cœur = I have set my heart upon it.

Il a mal au cœur = He is feeling sick.

Il a une maladie de cœur = He has heart-disease.

Elle fait la bouche en cœur = She puts on a captivating look; She purses up her lips.

Elle a le cœur gros = She is ready to cry; She is heavy-hearted.

Cœur. (*cont.*)

Si le cœur vous en dit = If you feel like it; If you have a mind to.

Je veux en avoir le cœur net = I must clear that up; I must get that off my chest.

Il a le cœur sur les lèvres = 1. He always says what he thinks (and this is always something good and kind); He is open-hearted. 2. He feels sick.

Être plein de cœur = To be full of generosity; To be noble-minded; To have a high sense of one's duties towards others.

Avoir le cœur sur la main = To be open-hearted, frank (i. e. the hand is ready to do what the heart suggests).

Un serrement de cœur = A sinking at the heart; A feeling of oppression and sadness.

Pour être heureux il faut avoir un mauvais cœur et un bon estomac = Happiness is attained by those who have a stony heart but a good digestion.

[This is a saying of Fontenelle who lived a hundred years (1657–1757). Deville put it into verse:

'Ce n'est point en courant et la brune et la blonde
Qu'on peut rencontrer le bonheur.
Il faut pour être heureux avoir en ce bas monde
Bon estomac et mauvais cœur.']

Il a un cœur d'artichaut = He falls in love (or pretends to) with every woman he meets.

Coiffer.

Voilà l'homme dont elle est coiffée = There is the man with whom she is smitten.

Être né coiffé = To be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth (literally, with a caul); To be born under a lucky star.

Coiffer sainte Catherine = To remain an old maid.

[In Roman Catholic churches the statues of saints are adorned with caps and dresses. St. Catherine is the patroness of virgins, so the care of dressing her statue on Sundays and feast days was always entrusted to unmarried women.]

Coin.

Cet homme mourra au coin d'un bois (or, *d'une haie*) = That man will die in a ditch.

Coin. (*cont.*) *Je connais les coins et les recoins de cette maison* = I know all the nooks and corners of that house. (See *Pli* and *Tréfonds.*)

Collier. *Il est franc du collier* = (of a horse) He pulls freely; (of a man) He never shirks his work.

Reprendre le collier de misère = To return to drudgery, to the old routine.

Colombe. *Craignez la colère de la colombe* = Even a worm will turn. (See *Chat.*)

Comble. *Le feu détruisit le bâtiment de fond en comble* = The fire completely gutted the building.

Elle est au comble de ses désirs = She is at the very height of her wishes.

Pour comble de malheur, il tomba malade = To crown his misfortune, he fell ill.

Sa chambre est sous les combles = His room is at the top of the house, under the tiles.

Ça, c'est le comble = That is the limit; That puts the lid on it.

Comité. *Venez demain, nous serons en petit comité* = Come to-morrow, there will be only a few intimate friends.

Comme. *Comme ci, comme ça* = So-so; indifferently.

Je ne l'ai pas dit, mais c'est tout comme = I did not say so, but it is just as if I did.

C'est tout comme = It comes to the same thing.

Commencer. **N'a pas fait qui commence* = The beginning is not everything.

['Qui commence le mieux ne fait rien s'il n'achève.'
CORNEILLE.]

**À moitié fait qui commence bien* = Well begun is half done; A good beginning is half the battle.

['*Unes vespres bien sonnées sont à demy dictes.*'
RABELAIS, *Gargantua*, cxl.

Also: *Matines bien sonnées sont à moitié dites.*

Barbe bien savonnée est à moitié rasée.

'Dimidium facti qui coepit habet.' HORACE, *Ep.* i. 2. 40.]

**Qui commence mal finit mal* = A bad day never has a good night.

Commode. *Le patron n'est pas commode* (fam.) = The master (boss) knows all our tricks, is not easily taken in, is very strict, is not an easy customer to deal with.

Compagnie. *Il m'a faussé compagnie* = He gave me the slip; He did not keep his appointment.

Vous me traitez comme si j'étais compagnie = You treat me as if I were somebody.

Il n'y a si bonne compagnie qui ne se quitte = The best of friends must part.

Compagnon. *Traiter quelqu'un de pair à compagnon* = To treat any one as an equal; To be 'hail-fellow-well-met' (cheek by jowl) with any one.

**Qui a compagnon a maître* = One is often obliged to give way to the wishes of those with whom one is associated.

['He travels the farthest who travels alone.' KIPLING.]

Compas. *Avoir le compas dans l'œil* (fam.) = To have a good eye for distances.

Compère. *C'est un rusé compère* = He is a sly dog, a cunning old fox, a dark horse, a deep one, an artful dodger. (See *Fin* and *Mouche.*)

[Other equivalents are: *un fin* (or, *fûté*) *matois* (vide MOLIÈRE, *George Dandin*, i. 2, *ad fin.*), *une fine mouche.* The feminine, *une fameuse commère* = a clever, artful woman.]

Tout se fait par compère et par commère = Everything is done by favour and interest, through friends at court.

Compliment. *Sans compliment* = Really; sincerely; I mean really what I say.

Comprendre. *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner* = Intolerance is the child of ignorance.

[Another author has added: *Peut-être; mais ce n'est point tout permettre.* Madame de Staël says (*Corinne*, xviii. 5): *Tout comprendre rend très indulgent.* Mrs. Augustus Craven (*Memoirs*, ii. 85) attributes to Sir M. E. Grant-Duff the phrase: 'On sait si peu de choses quand on ne sait pas tout.']

Compte. *Voici votre argent, voyez si vous avez votre compte* = Here is your money, see if it is right.

Je renonce à ce commerce, car je n'y trouve pas mon compte = I am giving up this business, for I make nothing by it.

Ne l'offensez pas, car vous n'y trouverez pas votre compte = Do not offend him, for you would get more than you cared for.

Erreur n'est pas compte = Errors excepted; There is a mistake in my bill.

Nous nous amusons à bon compte = We amuse ourselves at a small cost.

Vous êtes loin du compte = You are out in your reckoning.

On peut toujours à bon compte revenir = There is no harm in examining an account twice.

Je mets cela en ligne de compte = I take that into account.

Faisons un compte rond = Let us make it even money.

Pour se rendre compte de la chose = To get a clear idea of the matter.

Nous sommes de compte à demi dans l'entreprise = We are partners on equal terms in the venture; We are going halves in the venture.

À chacun son compte = Let every one have his due.

Au bout du compte = Upon the whole; After all.

En fin de compte = (lit.) When the addition is made; (fig.) When all is told; When all is said and done.

Il a son compte (or, *Son compte est réglé*) = 1. (lit.) He has his due. 2. (pop.) He is done for. (See *Affaire.*)

Compter. *Il lui compte les morceaux* = He grudges him the very food he eats.

**Qui compte sans son hôte compte deux fois* = He who reckons without his host must reckon again; Don't count your chickens before they are hatched. (See *Chômer* and *Peau.*)

Comptez dessus = Depend upon it.

Concurrence. *Vous pouvez faire des commandes en mon nom jusqu'à concurrence de* 5,000 *francs* = You can order goods in my name to the amount of £200.

Conduire. *Il conduit bien sa barque* = (fig.) He plays his cards well.

Conduite. *Tous ses camarades lui firent la conduite* = All his companions saw him off.

Confesser. *C'est le diable à confesser* = It is terribly hard to do.

Confession. *On lui donnerait le bon Dieu sans confession* = They would trust him to any extent (because of his saintly appearance).

Connaissance. *En connaissance de cause* = Knowingly.

Je suis en pays de connaissance = I am among people I know, among old friends.

Connaître. *Il est connu comme le loup blanc* = He is known to everybody.

Il gagne à être connu = He improves upon acquaintance.

Je ne le connais ni d'Ève ni d'Adam = I do not know him from Adam.

Je ne le connais ni de près ni de loin = I do not know him at all.

En chiffres connus = In plain figures.

Vous y connaissez-vous en vins? = Are you a judge of wine?

Je m'y connais = I understand all about it; I am an authority on it.

Ça me connaît = I am familiar with it.

[Or more familiarly: *Je la connais dans les coins* = I know every inch of it.]

Connu! (fam.) = That is an old tale.

Je la connais, celle-là (pop.) = That is nothing new; I've been 'had' before.

Conseil. **À parti pris pas de conseil* = Advice is useless to one who has made up his mind.

**La nuit porte conseil* = Sleep upon it; Time will show a plan; Take advice of your pillow.

Conseil. *Il a bientôt assemblé son conseil* = He makes up his (*cont.*) mind without consulting any one.

Conseiller. *'Aimez qu'on vous conseille et non pas qu'on vous loue'* = Prefer advice to praise.

[Boileau, *Art Poétique*, i. 192.]

Consentir. **Qui ne dit mot consent* = Silence gives consent.

Conséquence. *Cela ne tire pas à conséquence* = That is of no importance.

Conte. *Des contes à dormir debout* = Tedious, nonsensical tales; Old wives' tales. (See *Dormir.*)

Contentement. **Contentement passe richesse* = Enough is as good as a feast.

['Vivitur parvo bene cui paternum
Splendet in mensa tenui salinum
Nec leves somnos timor, aut cupido
Sordidus, aufert.'

Horace, *Odes*, ii. 16. 13.

thus neatly translated by Conington:

'More happy he, whose modest board
His father's well-worn silver brightens.
No fear, no lust for sordid hoard
His light sleep frightens.'

Also: *Mieux vaut assez que trop.*

'Qui borne ses désirs est toujours assez riche.' Voltaire.

German: 'Zu viel und zu wenig sind gleich schädlich.']

Contenter. *Il faut savoir se contenter de peu* = Better small fish than no fish; Half a loaf is better than no bread. (See *Grive* and *Pays.*)

On ne saurait contenter Dieu et son père = You cannot please everybody. (See *Monde.*)

Conter. *Il vous en conte de belles* = He is deceiving you finely; He is telling you fine tales.

Contrôle. *Vous êtes portés sur le contrôle* = Your names are placed on the roll.

Contrôler. *Une chaîne contrôlée* = A hall-marked chain.

Convertir. *Vous prêchez un converti* = You are talking to a man who thinks with you.

Coq. *Il est comme un coq en pâte* = He is in clover.

[Lit. one kept separately from the others to be fattened; *pâte* is its food. *Comme rats en paille* is sometimes used.]

Il est le coq du village = He is the cock of the walk.

Des coq-à-l'âne = Cock-and-bull stories; Disconnected rigmaroles.

[Tales that jump from talking of a cock to talking of an ass.]

Coquille. *À qui vendez-vous vos coquilles?* = Tell that to the marines. (See *Autre.*)

[Charles d'Orléans, *Rondeaux*, 148.]

Rentrer dans sa coquille = To draw in one's horns.

Il fait bien valoir ses coquilles = He praises his goods too much.

Cor. *À cor et à cri* = With hue and cry; Vehemently.

[Literally: With horn and cry. (A hunting term).]

Demander à cor et à cri = To clamour for.

Corde. *Être au bout de sa corde* (or, *son rouleau*) = To be at the end of one's tether; To have no more to say.

Vous verrez beau jeu si la corde ne rompt = You will see fine fun if no accident happens, if no hitch occurs.

Cette affaire a passé à fleur de corde = That business only just succeeded.

Cet homme file sa corde = That man will bring himself to the gallows.

Il ne faut pas parler de corde dans la maison d'un pendu = We must not make personal allusions; We must not allude to the skeleton in the cupboard. (See *Boiteux.*)

Il a de la corde de pendu dans sa poche = He has the devil's own luck.

[A piece of the rope with which a man had been hanged was, and is even now, considered as a charm against ill-luck. Archbishop Trench adduces other proverbs in reference to the man whose luck never forsakes him, so that from the very things which would be another man's ruin he extricates himself not only without harm but with credit: e. g. the Arabic: 'Cast him into the Nile, and he will come up with a fish in his mouth';

Corde. (*cont.*) the German: 'Würf' er einen Groschen aufs Dach, fiel' ihm ein Taler herunter' = If he threw a penny on to the roof, a dollar would come back to him. Contrast with these Chamfort's saying: *Il tombe sur le dos et se casse le nez* = He is terribly unlucky.]

Il tient la corde = He is leading; He is first favourite.

Vous touchez la corde sensible = You are touching the sore point.

Ne touchez pas cette corde = (fig.) Do not speak of that.

Cela est usé jusqu'à la corde = (lit.) That is worn threadbare; (fig.) That is thoroughly hackneyed; That's a stale trick.

Cordeau. *Aux États-Unis les rues sont tirées au cordeau* = In the United States the streets are perfectly straight.

Cordon. *Cordon, s'il vous plaît* = Open the door, please (to hall porters in Paris).

Corne. *Ne faites pas de cornes à ce livre* = Do not dog's-ear that book.

Corneilles. *Bayer aux corneilles* = To stare (*or*, gape) about vacantly.

Corps. *C'est un drôle de corps* = He is an odd fellow, a queer fish.

Nous verrons ce qu'il a dans le corps = We will see what he is made of.

Il s'est jeté à corps perdu dans cette affaire = He threw himself headlong (*or*, with might and main) into the matter.

Je le saisis à bras le corps = I seized him round the waist (in a struggle).

Ils se sont battus corps à corps = They fought hand to hand.

Je l'ai fait à mon corps défendant = I did it reluctantly, in self-defence.

Prendre du corps = To get stout.

Il a l'âme chevillée dans le corps = He has as many lives as a cat.

Corsaire. **À corsaire, corsaire et demi* = Set a thief to catch a thief.

[' Ars deluditur arte.' CATO.
'A trompeur, trompeur et demy.' CHARLES D'ORLÉANS, *Rondeaux*, 46.
Also : *Avec le renard on renarde.*]

**Corsaires contre corsaires ne font pas leurs affaires* = Dog does not eat dog ; Wolves gain nothing by attacking one another. (See *Loup.*)

[' Corsaires contre corsaires,
L'un l'autre s'attaquant ne font pas leurs affaires.' LA FONTAINE, *Tribut envoyé par les animaux à Alexandre*, imitating Régnier, *Satire* xii, *ad fin.*, who took it from the Spanish *De corsario a corsario no se llevan que los barriles.*]

Corvée. *C'est une vraie corvée !* = What a nuisance ! What a bore !

[*Corvée* originally referred to feudal forced labour. It is now a military term and means 'fatigue duty' : hence, any unpleasant task.]

Côte. *On lui compterait les côtes* = He is nothing but skin and bone.

Côté. *Être sur le côté* (or, *flanc*) = To be on one's back, ill.

Mettre les rieurs de son côté = To turn the laugh against a man.

Vous êtes du bon côté = You are on the right side.

Vous êtes du côté du manche = You are on the winning (*or*, safe) side.

Donner à côte = To miss the mark.

Je l'ai pris par son côte faible = I got on his blind side.

Coton. *Depuis sa faillite il file un mauvais coton* (fam.) = Since his failure, his health (*or*, reputation) has entirely broken down.

Couche. *Il en a une couche* (pop.) = What an awful stupid he is!

[*Une couche* is a layer or coat, as in a coat of paint. Here the layer is of stupidity.]

Coucher. *On est plus couché que debout* = Life is short compared with eternity.

Je l'ai couché en joue = I aimed at him.

Coucher. (*cont.*) *Coucher dans son fourreau* = To go to sleep without undressing; To turn in all standing (nav.).

**Comme on fait son lit, on se couche* = As you make your bed, so you must lie on it; Sow the wind and you reap the whirlwind; We drink as we brew.

[Also: *Telle semence, telle moisson* = As you sow, so you reap.]

Se coucher comme les poules = To go to bed with the sun, very early.

Coucher sur la dure = To lie on the ground, on the floor.

Coude. *Il ne se mouche pas du coude* (fam.) = 1. He is no fool. 2. He does things in grand style. (See *Pied.*)

Il a mal au coude (fam.) = He is very lazy. (See *Main.*)

Coudée. *Avoir les coudées franches* = (lit.) To have elbow-room; (fig.) To have full scope; To be able to act according to one's inclinations.

Coudre. *On ne sait quelle pièce y coudre* = One does not know how to prevent (*or*, cure) it.

Coule. *C'est un homme à la coule* (pop.) = He is a smart, knowing chap; He knows all the tricks of the trade.

[Compare: *Il la connaît dans les coins, celui-là* = He knows his business in every corner.]

Couler. *Ce qu'il dit coule de source* = What he says comes from the heart, comes fluently from his lips.

Cela coule de source = That follows naturally.

Couler à fond = (of ships) To founder; (of persons) To be ruined.

**Il faut laisser couler l'eau* = What can't be cured must be endured.

['Things without all remedy
Should be without regard.'

Macbeth, iii. 2.

Also more literally: *Il faut souffrir ce qu'on ne peut empêcher.*]

Coulisse. *Faire les yeux en coulisse* = To make sheep's eyes; To ogle.

Coup. **Faire d'une pierre deux coups* = To kill two birds with one stone.

Cette démarche a porté coup = That step told, had its effect.

Sans coup férir = Without striking a blow.

Il a fait un bon coup = He has made a good bargain.

Il vient de faire un mauvais coup = He has just committed a crime, a very bad action.

Pour le coup il ne m'échappera pas = This time he will not escape me.

J'irai à coup sûr = I shall go to a certainty, as sure as fate.

C'est donner un coup d'épée dans l'eau = It is an unsuccessful attempt. (See *Eau.*)

Il m'a porté un coup fourré = (fig.) He struck me a blow in the dark.

[This is a term derived from fencing; *un coup fourré* is a blow struck at an adversary at the same moment that he strikes.]

Le coup vaut la balle (or, *cela vaut le coup*) = It is worth trying.

Il faut toujours qu'elle donne son coup de patte = She always makes sarcastic (*or*, unpleasant) remarks.

C'est un coup monté = It is a pre-arranged affair, a put-up job.

On lui a monté le coup = They induced him to do it; They deceived him.

Il a bu un coup de trop = He has had a drop too much.

C'est venu après coup = It came too late, after the event.

Faire les cent coups = To amuse oneself noisily; To play all sorts of tricks.

Être aux cent coups = To be half mad (distracted) with anxiety; To be in the greatest difficulties.

C'est un coup qui porte = That is a home-thrust.

Avoir un coup de marteau = To be a little touched.

J'ai écrit trois lettres coup sur coup = I wrote three letters one after the other.

Coup. *Un coup de sang* = A rush of blood to the head.

Un coup de Jarnac = A treacherous blow; A blow below the belt.

[In a duel before the whole Court in 1547, Gui Chabot, Seigneur de Jarnac, wounded his adversary, La Châtaigneraie, with an unfair stroke. La Châtaigneraie refused to survive such an affront, tore off the bandages placed over his wound, and bled to death.]

Un coup de fouet = (lit.) A crack of a whip; (fig.) A sudden contraction of the muscles of the leg (or back).

Un coup d'état = A sudden, unexpected act of policy; A violent change in the Government (e.g. 18 brumaire 1799 or 2 décembre 1851).

Un coup de fion (fam.) = A finishing touch.

[Also: *La dernière main.*]

Donner le coup de grâce = To give the finishing stroke.

Il gagna mille francs tout d'un coup = He won £40 at one shot, all at once, at one 'go'.

Il s'en alla tout à coup = He went away suddenly, abruptly.

[*Tout d'un coup* and *tout à coup* are frequently used indiscriminately, even by French people.]

Un coup de tête = A moment of passion; A rash action.

Donner un coup de main = To give a helping hand.

J'ai manqué mon coup = I missed my shot; I failed.

Ils l'ont moulu de coups = They beat him black and blue.

Un coup de boutoir = (lit.) A blow from the snout of a pig; (fig.) A rough sudden outburst, an incisive blow.

Ce journal est écrit à coups de ciseaux = That newspaper is nothing but scissors and paste.

Un coup d'air = A cold caught by sitting in a draught.

Un coup du ciel = A stroke of good fortune.

Coup. (*cont.*) *Un coup de chapeau* = A bow in the street.

[A well-known quotation from Corneille runs:

'Mes pareils à deux fois ne se font pas connaître
Et pour leurs coups d'essai veulent des coups de maître.'
Le Cid, ii. 2.]

Coupe. **Il y a loin de la coupe aux lèvres* = There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.

[The Greek πολλὰ μεταξὺ πέλει κύλικος καὶ χείλεος ἄκρου (Aul. Gell. xiii. 17. 3) is said to have had its origin in the following circumstances:—Ancaeus, an ancient king of Samos, treated with extreme cruelty his slaves who were planting a vineyard for him; until at length one more ill-used than the rest prophesied that for his cruelty he should never drink of its wine. When the first vintage was over, the master bade this slave fill him a goblet, and, taking it in his hands, he taunted him with the failure of his prophecy. The slave answered with these words; and as he was speaking news was brought of a huge wild boar that was wasting the vineyard. Setting down the untasted cup and snatching up a spear the master went out to meet the wild boar and was slain in the encounter. Aulus Gellius, *l. c.* § 1, quotes Marcus Cato as saying: 'Saepe audivi inter os et offam multa intervenire posse.' Compare St. Augustine:

'Between the stirrup and the ground
Mercy I sought, mercy I found';

the German:

'Zwischen Mund und Glas
Geschieht dies und das';

and the Spanish: 'De la mano a la boca se pierde la sopa.'
Other variants in French are:

Entre la bouche et le verre
Le vin souvent tombe à terre.

Vin versé n'est pas avalé.

En amour, en cour, et à la chasse
Chacun ne prend ce qu'il pourchasse.]

Mettre en coupe réglée = (lit.) To cut down periodically (of forests); (fig.) To lay regularly under contribution.

Couper. *Il s'est coupé dans ses réponses* = He contradicted himself in his answers.

Il lui a coupé la parole = He interrupted him.

Son père lui a coupé les vivres = His father stopped his allowance.

Ce verre de bière m'a coupé les jambes = My legs feel shaky after that glass of beer.

Couper. (*cont.*) *Couper un cheveu en quatre* = To split hairs.

Coupons le câble = Let us take the decisive step; Let us cut the painter.

[Sieyès, June 10, 1789.]

Cela lui a coupé le sifflet (pop.) = That stopped his mouth; That shut him up.

Je vais y couper (pop.) = I am going to 'cut' that; I am not going to do it.

Ça vous la coupe = That's a stumper for you; You can't answer that.

[Sardou, *Madame Sans-Gêne.*]

Courage. *Prenez votre courage à deux mains* = Summon up all your courage.

Courage! tout finira bien = Cheer up! all will yet be well.

Courant. *Je vous écrirai fin courant* (commercial) = I will write to you at the end of the present month.

Je ne suis pas au courant de l'affaire = I have not the latest information on the point; I am not up (well posted) in the matter.

Courir. *Par le temps qui court* = Nowadays; As times go.

Être fou à courir les champs = To be as mad as a March hare.

Nous courons même fortune = We are rowing in the same boat.

'Rien ne sert de courir, il faut partir à point' = It is no good hurrying if you have not started in time.

[La Fontaine, *Le lièvre et la tortue*, vi. 10, imitated from Rabelais, *Gargantua*, xxi.: 'Ce n'est tout l'avantage de courir bien tost mais bien de courir de bonne heure.' 'Helleborum frustra quum iam cutis aegra tumebit Poscentes videas: venienti occurrite morbo.'—Persius, iii. 63.]

Courrier. *Répondez par retour du courrier* = Answer by return of post.

Faire son courrier (commercial) = To write one's letters.

Courroie. *Il faut lui serrer la courroie* = We must curtail his allowance; We must keep him on short commons.

Faire du cuir d'autrui large courroie = To be generous with other people's money.

Cours. *Les pièces des États du Pape n'ont plus cours*=The coins of the Papal States are no longer legal tender.

Un capitaine au long cours=A captain of a trading vessel going to distant foreign ports.

Court. *Je suis resté court*=I did not know what to say.

Je l'ai pris à court=I took him unawares.

Il se trouve à court (d'argent)=He is short of money.

Dites cela tout court=Say that and no more.

Il l'a appelé Jean tout court=He called him simply (*or*, just) John (without Mr. or surname).

Couteau. *Ils sont à couteaux tirés*=They are at daggers drawn.

[Formerly: *Ils en sont aux couteaux tirés.*]

Aller en Flandre sans couteau=To embark in an enterprise without the necessary resources.

[Also: *Aller aux mûres sans crochet.*]

C'est comme le couteau de Jeannot=That is like the Irishman's gun (said of anything that has been mended so often as to have nothing of the original left).

Coûter. *Rien ne lui coûte*=He sticks at nothing; He spares no trouble.

Coûte que coûte=Cost what it may.

Coûter les yeux de la tête=To cost a small fortune, a fearful lot of money, a mint of money, a pretty penny.

Coutume. **Une fois n'est pas coutume*=It is only this once; One swallow does not make a summer; Once does not count.

Coutumier. *Il est coutumier du fait*=It is not the first time he has done it; He is in the habit of doing it.

Couture. *Ils ont été battus à plate couture*=They were beaten hollow.

Couvercle. *Couvercle digne du chaudron*=The lid matches the cauldron; They are a precious pair. (See *Farine.*)

[Compare: 'Arcades ambo.'—VERGIL, *Eclogues*, vii. 4.]

Couvert. *Mettez le couvert* = Lay the cloth (for dinner).

Mettez un couvert de plus = Put another knife and fork (for another guest); Lay for one more.

Cracher. *C'est son père tout craché* (fam.) = He is the very spit (*or*, less fam., image) of his father.

Il a craché en l'air et ça lui est retombé sur le nez (pop.) = He wished to do harm to another, but it recoiled on himself; He threw a stone at his neighbour's cat and smashed his own window.

Il ne crache pas dessus = He does not despise it; He likes it very much; It is not to be sneezed at.

Crémaillère. *Pendre la crémaillère* = To give a house-warming.

[Crémaillère = tige de fer suspendue au dessus du foyer d'une cheminée garnie de crans, qui permettent de la fixer plus ou moins haut, et terminée par un bout recourbé auquel on accroche une marmite. Compare Longfellow's poem, 'The Hanging of the Crane'.]

Crever. *Le roi Jean a crevé les yeux à Arthur* = King John caused Arthur's eyes to be put out.

Je ne voyais pas mon livre, cependant il me crevait les yeux = I did not see my book, yet it was staring me in the face (right under my nose).

Cri. *Il n'y a qu'un cri sur son compte* = There is only one opinion about him.

Elle poussa les hauts cris = She screamed at the top of her voice; She complained loudly.

C'est le dernier cri = It is the last thing out.

Cribler. *Criblé de mitraille* = Riddled with grape-shot.

Criblé de dettes = Over head and ears in debt.

Crier. *Crier famine sur un tas de blé* = To cry out for what one has in plenty.

Plumer la poule sans la faire crier = To fleece a person adroitly, without his perceiving it.

Il entra sans crier gare = He came in without word or warning.

Crin. *Un républicain à tous crins* = Every inch a republican.

Crin. (*cont.*) [Properly of a horse with flowing mane and tail, hence thorough, strong.
Compare: *Un roi de la tête aux pieds* = Every inch a king.]

Crochet. *Il a trente ans, et cependant il vit aux crochets de sa mère* = He is thirty years old, and yet his mother has to keep him.

Croire. *Il s'en croit beaucoup* = He thinks a great deal of himself.

C'est à n'y pas croire = It is not to be believed; It is so extraordinary (incredible, preposterous) that we can hardly believe it.

A l'en croire il a eu tous les prix = If he is to be believed he won all the prizes.

'*Et chacun croit fort aisément*
Ce qu'il craint et ce qu'il désire.'
= The wish is father to the thought.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, i. 6. *Le loup et le renard.*
Compare 2 *Henry IV*, iv. 5.

'Fere libenter homines id quod volunt credunt.'
Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, iii. 18.]

Croix. *Aller au-devant de quelqu'un avec la croix et la bannière* = To receive any one with great fuss and ceremony (often used ironically).

Croquer. *Votre enfant est gentil à croquer* = Your child is a charming little fellow.

Il croquait le marmot = He was dancing attendance; He was cooling his heels.

[Littré gives as the explanation of this obscure expression that artists while waiting for their patrons used to draw pictures of little marmots in the vestibule. Others assert that in the antechambers of the rich were to be found dishes of cakes in the form of little marmots, which visitors used to eat (*croquer*) whilst waiting. But both explanations need confirmation.]

Cru. *S'agenouiller à cru* = To kneel on the bare ground, on the cold stone (without a hassock or carpet).

[Literally, to kneel on the bare knee, but the quality has passed from the person to the object.]

C'est de son cru = That is of his own creation.

Cruche. *C'est une vraie cruche* (fam.) = She is a silly goose.

Cueillir. *'Cueillez, cueillez votre jeunesse.'* = 'Gather ye rose-buds while ye may.'

[The French is a line of Ronsard, the English of Herrick.]

Cuir. *Pester entre cuir et chair* (fam.) = To fume inwardly.

Faire des cuirs (or, *faire un velours*) = To drop one's h's.

[Really these are faults made by uneducated French people in pronunciation, consisting in sounding *s* in a liaison where there is not one, as *j'ai-z été* for *j'ai été*. Another fault consists in placing *s* for *t* or *t* for *s* in a liaison as *j'étai-t ici* for *j'étais ici*. This is called a *pataquès* and was formerly written *pat-à-qu'est-ce*. The following account is given of its origin: A gentleman at a ball picked up a fan which he handed to the lady to whom he thought it belonged. She replied: 'Ce n'est point-z-à moi, monsieur.' He then handed it to another, who said: 'Il n'est pas-t-à moi.' Whereupon he remarked: 'Puisqu'il n'est point-z-à vous et qu'il n'est pas-t-à vous, ma foi, je ne sais pas-t-à qu'est-ce.' (See DOUMERGUE, *Manuel des amateurs de la langue française*.)

Two other faults of French pronunciation may be mentioned here *zézayer* is to pronounce *j*, *ge* and *gi* like *z*, e. g. *ze* for *je*, as the Marseillais do. *Grasseyer* is to speak thickly, emphasizing the *r* at the back of the throat, e. g. *il fait jou-ar* for *il fait jour*.]

Cuirasse. *Les observations glissent sur lui comme sur une cuirasse* = Blame slips off him as water off a duck's back.

Cuire. *Vous viendrez cuire à mon four* = Some day you will need my assistance.

Il vous en cuira = You will smart for it.

Avoir son pain cuit = To have one's bread and cheese, a competency.

Culbute. **Au bout du fossé la culbute* = At the end of the run comes the fall.

[This expression refers to those who, from carelessness or wrong-headedness, are resigned to the consequences of their bad conduct.]

Faire la culbute = To turn head over heels; (fig.) to go bankrupt.

Cuver. *Cuver son vin* = To sleep oneself sober.

D.

Damas. *Il a trouvé son chemin de Damas* = He has been converted to opinions which previously he opposed.

[A reference to St. Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus.]

Dame. *Une grande dame de par le monde* = A great lady in the eyes of the world.

[This should be written *Une grande dame de la part du monde.* Littré points out that the error in spelling *par* for *part* is a very old one; it would appear to date from the thirteenth century from the examples he quotes. *De par le monde* must be derived from *de parte mundi*, as *de per* was never used.]

Damer. *Damer le pion à quelqu'un* = To outwit (*or*, to check-mate) some one.

[From the game of draughts, *dame* = a king, *pion* = a man.]

Damner. *Cet homme est son âme damnée* = That man does his dirty work for him, is his tool (*or*, cat's-paw).

[The man who does the dirty work knows he is damning his soul by doing it, but does it all the same for the money or interest it brings him.]

Danger. *Il n'y a pas de danger* = No fear of that; Don't you fret!

Danser. *Il ne sait sur quel pied danser* = He does not know which way to turn.

Il en dansera en l'air = He will swing for it.

Danser devant le buffet = To have nothing to eat.

Dater. *Cet événement date de loin* = That event happened long ago.

Dé. *À vous le dé* = It is your turn to play (at dice). (See *Avoir.*)

Ne nous flattez pas le dé = Speak out without any reserve.

[*Flatter le dé* is to let the dice slide gently out of the box.]

'Car madame à jaser tient le dé tout le jour' = Madame engrosses the conversation all day long.

[Molière, *Tartufe*, i. 1.]

Débandade. *Ils laissèrent tout à la débandade* (*à l'abandon, à la grâce de Dieu*) = They left all at sixes and sevens, in confusion.

Fuir à la débandade = To fly helter-skelter.

Débit. *Le ministre lui a accordé un débit de tabac* = The minister has given him a licence to sell tobacco.

[The sale of tobacco, snuff, gunpowder, and cards is a Government monopoly in France.]

Debout. **Mieux vaut goujat debout qu'empereur enterré* = 'A living dog is better than a dead lion.'—Ecclesiastes ix. 4.

[La Fontaine, *La Matrone d'Éphèse. Goujat* first meant a soldier's servant (as here), now it means a hodman, or bricklayer's apprentice, hence a vulgar, coarse fellow, a bungler.]

Cela ne tient pas debout = That won't hold water.

Débrider. *Il a écrit vingt pages sans débrider* = He has written twenty pages at a stretch.

Déchausser. *Il ne faut pas se déchausser pour manger cela* = It is not worth while sitting down to eat that.

[The ancients were in the habit of reclining barefoot at their meals.]

Décoiffer. **Décoiffer* (*Découvrir*) *S. Pierre pour coiffer S. Paul* = To rob Peter to pay Paul.

Découvrir. *On a découvert le pot aux roses* = They have discovered the mystery, the secret.

Être à découvert = To be unprotected, undisguised.

Décrocher. *Un décrochez-moi-ça* (pop.) = A reach-me-down (second-hand garment).

Dedans. *Elle est tout en dedans* = She is not communicative.

On l'a mis dedans (fam.) = 1. They took him in (i.e. they deceived him). 2. They ran him in (i.e. they put him in prison).

[The second meaning is more often translated: 'On l'a coffré.']

Comme un nigaud, j'ai donné dedans = Like a goose, I fell into the trap.

Je ne sais si je suis dedans ou dehors = I do not know which side to take; I do not know whether I have made a profit or not.

Défaire. *Il a le visage défait* = He has a pale, worn-out look.

Défaite. *Cette marchandise est d'une bonne défaite* = These goods have a quick sale.

Défaut. *Attaquez-le au defaut de la cuirasse* = Attack him on his weak point.

Défense. *Défense d'afficher* = Stick no bills.

Défense d'entrer = No admittance.

Défense d'entrer sous peine d'amende = Trespassers will be prosecuted.

Dégainer. *Être brave jusqu'au dégainer* = To be brave until it comes to blows.

[*Dégainer* = to unsheathe a sword.]

Dégourdir. *Ils auront à se dégourdir ou à déguerpir* = They will either have to wake up or to clear out.

Se dégourdir les jambes = To stretch one's legs; To go out for a run.

Dégoûter. *Faire le dégoûté* = To be fastidious, dainty.

Si j'avais la fortune de Rothschild, je serais content.—Vous n'êtes pas dégoûté! = If I had Rothschild's fortune I should be satisfied.—I should rather think so! You don't want much!

Dehors. *Sauver le dehors* = To save appearances.

Il n'a pas de dehors = His personal appearance is not prepossessing; He looks nobody.

Délit. *En flagrant délit* = In the very act; red-handed.

[Lat. *In flagrante delicto.*]

Déloger. *Déloger sans tambour ni trompette* = To leave without beat of drum.

Demain. *Avec lui c'est toujours demain* = He always procrastinates.

Demander. *Je vous demande un peu!* = Did you ever hear such a thing!

Je ne demande pas mieux = That is just what I want; Nothing I should like better.

La belle demande! = What a question to ask!

Demandeur. **A beau demandeur beau refuseur* = Diamond cut diamond.

[i. e. 'If you are not ashamed to ask, I am not ashamed to refuse.' See *Fin* and *Chat.*]

Démanger. *La langue lui démange* = He longs to speak; He is dying to put in a word.

Demeurant. *Au demeurant, le meilleur fils du monde* = But when all is said (*or*, except for that) the best fellow in the world.

[Clément Marot (1495–1544) wrote the following:

Requête au Roi pour avoir esté desrobé.

'J'avois un jour ung vallet de Gascongne,
Gourmant, yvrongne et asseuré menteur,
Pipeur, larron, jureur, blasphémateur,
Sentant la hart de cent pas à la ronde.
Au demeurant, le meilleur fils du monde.'

Thus the quotation is now applied to any easy-going man who gives way to vice more from good nature and slackness than from any other cause. It is also used ironically of real rascals.]

Demeure. *Si l'on vous mettait en demeure, vous le feriez* = If you were compelled, you would do it.

Denier. *Cet homme n'a pas un denier vaillant* = That man is not worth a brass farthing.

Rendre compte à livres, sous et deniers = To give an account to the uttermost farthing.

Dent. *J'ai les dents bien longues aujourd'hui* = I am very hungry to-day.

Je suis sur les dents = I am done up.

J'ai une dent contre lui = I have a grudge against him.

[Compare: *Je lui garde un chien de ma chienne* (pop.) = I shall revenge myself some day.]

Autant prendre la lune avec les dents = You might just as well try to scale the moon.

Manger du bout des dents = To eat without an appetite; To eat daintily; To play with one's food.

['Dente superbo.'—Horace, *Satires*, ii. 6. 87.

Compare: *rire du bout des dents*; or, *rire du bout des lèvres.* (See *Bout.*)]

Dent. (*cont.*) *Déchirer quelqu'un à belles dents* = To tear a person's reputation to shreds.

[Also more forcibly: *Passer quelqu'un à tabac*, which, however, is more often used of giving a person a sound beating.]

Dépense. **Les folles dépenses refroidissent la cuisine* = Wilful waste makes woeful want.

Déplaire. *Qu'il ne vous en déplaise* = With your permission; By your leave; If you'll allow me; An it please you.

[Sometimes shortened to: *Ne vous déplaise*, as in La Fontaine, *Fables*, i. 1. The sense is often ironical and means 'whether you like it or not.']

Dépourvu. *Au dépourvu* = Unprepared.

Dératé. *Courir comme un dératé* = To go like a shot; To run like mad.

[*Rate* = spleen. The Greeks believed that men and animals ran faster if their spleen was removed. 'On sait que l'extirpation de la rate se pratiquait chez les coureurs d'antiquité pour éviter l'essoufflement.'—Couvreur, *Les Merveilles du corps humain*. Comp. Pliny, xxvi. 13.]

Dernier. *Une représentation du dernier vulgaire* = A display vulgar to the last degree; A very low show.

['Ce que vous dites là est du dernier bourgeois.'
Molière, *Les Précieuses ridicules*, sc. 5.]

Désirer. **Plus on désire une chose, plus elle se fait attendre* = A watched pot never boils.

Cela laisse à désirer = There is room for improvement.

Désorienter. *Je suis désorienté* = 1. I am disconcerted. 2. I am out of my element; I do not feel at home; I have lost my bearings.

Desserrer. *Je n'ai pas desserré les dents* = I never opened my lips.

Dessus. *Par-dessus le marché* = Into the bargain; Over and above.

Il n'y a rien au-dessus de cela = That beats everything.

Sens dessus dessous = All upside down; Topsy-turvy.

Dessus. (*cont.*) *Ils ont eu le dessus* = They got the best of it. [*Avoir le dessous* = to get the worst of it.]

Prendre le dessus = To gain the upper hand.

J'en ai par-dessus la tête = I am worried out of my life with it. (See *Dos.*)

Il le fera par-dessus l'épaule = He will never do it. [Comp. 'over the left', in schoolboy slang.]

Il m'a regardé par-dessus l'épaule = He looked at me contemptuously.

Destinée. *On n'échappe pas à sa destinée* = He that is born to be hanged will never be drowned.

Détente. *Il est dur à la détente* = (fig.) He is close-fisted, a miser.

Déterrer. *Il a l'air d'un déterré* = He looks as pale as death, as pale as a ghost.

Détour. *Faire un détour* = To go a roundabout way.

Il est sans détour = He is straightforward.

Dette. *Il est criblé de dettes* = He is head over ears in debt. [For *criblé* one finds *accablé, perdu,* or *abîmé.*]

Des dettes criardes = Small debts to tradespeople or workmen (who are continually asking for their money).

Deuil. *J'en ai fait mon deuil* = I have resigned myself to the loss of it.

Deux. *Maintenant, à nous deux!* = Now I will settle with you; Now is the time for a private explanation; Now to business.

**Deux s'amusent, trois s'embêtent* (fam.) = Two's company, three's none.

Tous les deux jours; De deux jours l'un = Every other day.

Piquer des deux = To spur on one's horse; To rush forward.

Contre deux Hercule ne peut = Two to one is odds enough.

Deux. (*cont.*) '*Deux estions et n'avions qu'un cœur*' = 'Two hearts that beat as one.'

[The French is a quotation from a rondeau of Villon, the English is the translation by Maria Lovell of two lines by von Münch-Bellinghausen :

'Zwei Seelen und ein Gedanke,
Zwei Herzen und ein Schlag.'

Two souls, but with a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one.

Compare Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, xvi. 267 : 'Two friends, two bodies with one Soul inspir'd.']

Devant. **Les premiers vont devant* = First come, first served. (See *Premier.*)

Il faut prendre les devants = One must be first in the field.

Allons au-devant de lui = Let us go and meet him.

Dévider. *Mathurin dévide le jars* (pop.) = Jack Tar is spinning a yarn.

Devoir. *Il doit au tiers et au quart* (or, *à Jean et à Paul, à Dieu et au diable*) = He owes money to everybody ; He is in debt all round.

Il doit plus d'argent qu'il n'est gros = He owes more money than he can pay.

**Qui a terme ne doit rien* = No one need pay before a debt is due.

**Qui ne doit rien n'a rien à craindre* = Out of debt, out of danger.

**À chacun son dû* = Give the devil his due ; Every man is worth his hire.

**Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra* = Do your duty, come what may.

['Faites votre devoir et laissez faire aux dieux.'
CORNEILLE, *Horace*, iii. 8.]

Dussé-je en mourir = Were I to die for it.

Chose convenue, chose due = A promise must be kept.

Dévolu. *J'ai jeté mon dévolu sur cela* = I have fixed my choice upon that.

Dévotion. *Il n'est de dévotion que de jeune prêtre* = Enthusiasm wears out in time; New brooms sweep clean. (See *Balai.*)

Diable. *C'est le diable qui bat sa femme et qui marie sa fille* = It is raining and the sun is shining at the same time.

Tirer le diable par la queue = To be always hard up for a living; To be in Queer Street. (See *Bourse* and *Sec.*)

Faire le diable à quatre = To make a terrible noise; To play all sorts of tricks; To play Old Harry. (See *Quatre.*)

Le diable chante la grand'messe = He hides his vices under the cloak of religion.

C'est le diable à confesser = It is terribly hard to do.

Il a le diable au corps = He is never still, quite unmanageable, very energetic.

C'est un air de porter le diable en terre = It is an air to conjure up the devil.

**Il n'est pas si diable qu'il est noir* = The devil is not as black as he is painted.

[Or: *Le diable n'est pas si noir qu'il en a l'air.* 'The lion is not so fierce as they paint him.' G. Herbert, *Iacula Prudentium.*]

Se démener comme un diable dans un bénitier = To rush about half-mad.

Loger le diable dans sa bourse = To be penniless. (See *Bourse.*)

['Et logeant le diable en sa bourse,
C'est à dire, n'y logeant rien.'
La Fontaine, *Fables*, ix. 16.]

Quand le diable fut vieux il se fit ermite =
The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;
The devil was well, the devil a monk was he!

[Compare the Italian: 'Passato il punto, gabbato il santo' = The peril past, the saint mocked.
Also: The river past and God forgotten.]

Aller au diable Vauvert (corrupted into *au vert*) = To go very far away, a devil of a way; To disappear.

[The Carthusians, having been given a large building at Gentilly by St. Louis, coveted the abandoned mansion of Vauvert (= *vallon vert*), which they could see from their windows. But to ask for it without a valid reason was to court refusal. So they caused it to be haunted by evil spirits, and the king was soon glad to get rid of this uncanny possession. It is needless to add that the spirits were exorcised directly the monks took possession. It stood in the *rue de Vauvert*, beyond the Luxembourg,

Diable. (*cont.*) then a remote suburb of Paris; the expression was equivalent to going to the end of the town and, thus, very far off.]

C'est là le diable (or, *le hic*) = There is the rub.

Elle a la beauté du diable = All her beauty consists in her youth and freshness.

[Even the Devil was beautiful when he was young.]

Fait à la diable (i.e. *à la manière du diable*) = Done anyhow, in a slipshod way, slap-dash.

[Also: *fait à la 6, 4, 2*, i. e. all backwards, in the wrong order; *fait à la n'importe comment, à la va-comme-je-te-pousse* or *à la je m'en fiche.*]

Dieu. *À Dieu ne plaise!* = God forbid!

Jurer ses grands dieux = To affirm vehemently; To swear by all that one holds sacred.

Dieu sait bien ce qu'il nous faut = God sends the shrewd cow short horns.

À barque désespérée Dieu fait trouver le port = When night is darkest, dawn is nearest; When need is highest, help is nighest; The darkest hour is that before the dawn; When things are at their worst, they mend.

Différer. **Ce qui est différé* (or, *Partie remise*) *n'est pas perdu* = All is not lost that is delayed.

[German: 'Aufgeschoben ist nicht aufgehoben.']

Diligence. *Voyager par la diligence d'Adam* = To travel on shanks' nag.

[German: 'Auf Schusters Rappen.']

Dindon. *C'est un franc dindon* = He is a thorough goose.

Être le dindon de la farce = To be the dupe, the butt, the laughing-stock.

Dire. *Pour mieux dire* = Or rather.

Pour tout dire = In a word.

C'est tout dire = That is saying all, enough.

[e. g. 'Cet homme est-il honnête?'—'Je lui ai prêté 500 fr. il y a deux ans et il n'a jamais voulu me rendre un sou. C'est tout dire.']

Pour ainsi dire = So to speak.

Je ne vous dis que ça = I cannot tell you any more, but it is a fact.

[This can also be translated: 'I can tell you!' as in 'Je me suis bien amusé, je ne vous dis que ça!']

Dire. (*cont.*)

Il n'y a pas à dire = There is no denying that.

Cela ne se dit pas = That is not good French.

Je me le suis tenu pour dit = I took it for granted.

Soit dit entre nous = Quite between ourselves.

Cela est bon à dire, mais . . . = That is all very well for a speech, but . . . ; That is all very fine, but . . .

Il est sensible au qu'en dira-t-on = He is sensitive to public opinion; He is easily influenced by what people say about him, by what Mrs. Grundy will say.

Il était dit que j'arriverais trop tard = The Fates had willed that I should come too late.

Quand je vous le disais! (or, *Je vous l'avais bien dit!*) = I told you so!

Ah! vous m'en direz tant! = 1. Well, that alters the case! 2. Ah! now I understand, why did you not say so at first? 3. There's no going against such a reason as that.

[This expression has almost as many meanings as *n'est-ce pas.* The above are a few of them. It is often used ironically.]

À qui le dites-vous? = Am I not perfectly aware of it? Don't I know it?

Au dire de tout le monde = According to what everybody says; According to the general opinion.

Je l'irai dire à Rome = It is so unlikely that if it happens I will undertake a pilgrimage to Rome; I'll eat my hat.

[Comp. Racine, *Épigramme III, Sur Andromaque.*]

Cela ne me dit rien = That has no effect upon me; I have no desire for it; That does not appeal to me.

Il agit d'une manière qui en dit long sur ses protestations = He acts in a way that allows the value of his protests to be guessed.

Discrétion. *On nous donna du vin à discrétion* = They gave us as much wine as we wanted (wine *ad libitum*).

Diseur. *Les grands diseurs ne sont pas les grands faiseurs* = Much cry and little wool.

Distance. *La distance grandit tout prestige* =
''Tis distance lends enchantment to the view
And robes the mountain in its azure hue.'

[Campbell, *Pleasures of Hope*, i. 7.
'De loin c'est quelque chose et de près ce n'est rien.'—La Fontaine, *Fables*, iv. 10.]

Diversité. '*Diversité c'est ma devise*' = 'Variety is the spice of life.'

[La Fontaine, *Contes*, iv. 12, and Cowper, *Task*, ii. 606.]

Doigt. *Je lui ai donné sur les doigts* = I rapped his knuckles (lit. and fig.).

Il y met les quatre doigts et le pouce = (lit.) He eats greedily; (fig.) He acts clumsily.

Ils sont comme les deux doigts de la main = They are hand and glove together, inseparable.

Vous avez mis le doigt dessus = You have hit the right nail on the head; You have touched the spot.

Mon petit doigt me l'a dit = A little bird told me so.

Il était à deux doigts de la mort = He was at death's door, within an ace of death.

Se fourrer le doigt dans l'œil jusqu'au coude (pop.) = To deceive oneself most blindly; To put one's foot in it.

Savoir sur le bout du doigt = To know perfectly; To have at one's finger-ends.

Il lui obéit au doigt et à l'œil = He is at his beck and call.

Un doigt de vin (fam.) = A toothful of wine.

Dommage. *C'est dommage!* = What a pity!

Après dommage chacun est sage = All are wise after the event.

Don. *Elle a le don de plaire* = She has the happy knack of pleasing.

Donner. *Ils lui en ont donné tout du long de l'aune* = They beat him black and blue.

Je vous le donne en dix = I bet you ten to one you will not guess it.

Donner. (*cont.*)

**Qui donne tôt donne deux fois* = He gives twice who gives in a trice; Slow help is no help.

['Bis dat qui dat celeriter.'—Publilius Syrus, v. 235. *Cito*, which is now used instead of *celeriter*, appears to be a later alteration.]

Le régiment a donné = The regiment has engaged.

'La façon de donner vaut mieux que ce qu'on donne' = 'Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.'

[Corneille, *Menteur*, i. 1, and *Hamlet*, iii. 1.]

On ne lui donnerait pas quarante ans = You would not take him for forty.

On t'en donnera des tabliers propres pour les salir = You ask too much.

J'ai passé quinze jours à Paris et je m'en suis donné = I spent a fortnight in Paris, and I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

[This idiom implies movement, excitement, &c.]

C'est donné = It's simply giving it away.

Donnant donnant = Fair's fair. Give and take.

Dormir.

Dormir sur les deux oreilles = (lit.) To sleep soundly; (fig.) To have no cause for anxiety.

Dormir comme une marmotte, comme un sabot, comme une souche, les (or, *à*) *poings fermés, comme un sonneur* = To sleep like a top, like a log.

Dormir la grasse matinée = To lie late in bed.

Il nous a dit des contes à dormir debout = He told us tedious, nonsensical tales; old wives' tales.

['Γραῶν ὕθλος.'—Plato, *Theaetet.* 176 B.
'Aniles fabellae.'—Hor. *Sat.* ii. 6, 78.]

**Qui dort dîne* = Sleeping is as good as eating.

**Qui a renommée de se lever matin peut dormir jusqu'à midi* = A good reputation covers a multitude of sins.

Dormir en gendarme = To sleep with one eye open.

Dos.

Il ne se laisse pas manger la laine sur le dos = He is not the man to let himself be made a fool of; He will not allow people to take the food out of his mouth; He will not tamely submit to any imposition.

Le juge les a renvoyés dos à dos = The judge non-suited them both.

Dos. (*cont.*)

Il fait le gros dos = He gives himself airs.

En dos d'âne = Sloping on both sides, sharp-ridged.

Je me suis mis le juge à dos = I have made an enemy of the judge.

Il tombe sur le dos et se casse le nez = He is terribly unlucky; Whatever he attempts turns out badly; He that is born under a threepenny planet will never be worth a groat. (See *Corde.*)

J'en ai plein le dos (pop.) = I am sick and tired of it; I am fed up with it.

Il a bon dos = His back is broad enough to stand a good deal.

Il me scie le dos = He bores me to death.

Double. *C'est un double coquin* = He is a thorough rascal.

C'est un homme double = He is a double-faced man.

Douceur. **Plus fait douceur que violence* = Kindness does more than harshness; More flies are caught with honey than with vinegar.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, vi. 3]

Il faudra le prendre en douceur = You must tackle him gently.

Doute. *Cela ne fait aucun doute* = There is no doubt about it.

Dans le doute abstiens-toi = When in doubt, do nothing.

[A translation of one of the precepts of Zoroaster.]

Douter. *Je ne me doutais de rien* = I did not suspect anything; I was living in a fool's paradise.

Je m'en doutais = I thought so.

Douzaine. *C'est un poète comme on en trouve à la douzaine* = He is a very minor poet; He is an everyday kind of poet.

[Régnier, *Sat.* iv.]

Dragée. *Tenir la dragée haute à quelqu'un* = To make a person pay well (*or*, wait a long time) for what he desires.

Dragon. *Cette femme est un vrai dragon* = 1. That woman is a virago. 2. That woman is very masculine (in appearance and manners).

Drap. *Je suis dans de beaux draps* = I am in a fine mess, in a pretty pickle.

Il voudrait avoir le drap et l'argent = He would like to have his cake and eat it too.

Drapeau. *Elle a déjà un fils sous les drapeaux* = She already has a son in the army.

'*Le drapeau rouge n'a jamais fait que le tour du Champ de Mars, mais le drapeau tricolore a fait le tour du monde*' = Socialism merely talks and destroys, nationality acts and conquers.

[Lamartine, Feb. 25, 1848.]

Droit. *Remettez ceci à qui de droit* = Give this to the proper person, to the person who has a right to it.

Il fera droit à votre demande = He will accede to your request.

Il fait son droit = He is studying for the bar.

Droit comme un I = As upright as a dart.

Drôle. *C'est un drôle de corps* = He is a queer fish.

C'est un mauvais drôle = He is a downright scamp.

Dru. *Frapper fort et dru* = To strike with might and main.

Dupe. '*On commence par être dupe ; on finit par être fripon*' = The pigeon oft becomes the hawk.

[Madame Deshoulières. *Réflexion sur le jeu.*]

Dupont. *Dupont, Dubois, ou Durand* = Smith, Brown, or Robinson.

E.

Eau. **Il n'est pire eau que l'eau qui dort* = Still waters run deep.

['Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep.'
2 Henry VI, iii. 1.]

**C'est porter de l'eau à la mer* (or, *rivière*) = It is carrying coals to Newcastle.

Eau. (*cont.*)

[Aristophanes (*Aves*, 301) has γλαυκ' Ἀθήναζε = An owl to Athens; the Hebrew equivalent was 'Enchantments to Egypt', and the Late Latin 'Indulgences to Rome'.]

Cet homme aime à pêcher en eau trouble = That man likes fishing in troubled waters.

**Ils se ressemblent comme deux gouttes d'eau* = They are as like as two peas.

Tout va à vau l'eau = All is going to wreck and ruin.

[*À vau l'eau* = With the current.]

Pendant l'inondation le toit de cette maison était à fleur d'eau = During the flood the top of that house was on a level with the water.

C'est un donneur d'eau bénite de cour = He makes empty promises.

Les eaux sont basses chez lui = He is hard up; He is in low water.

C'est donner un coup d'epée dans l'eau = It is useless trouble, an unsuccessful attempt, like beating the air.

['Ἐν ὕδατι γράφειν.'—Plato, *Phaedrus*, 276 c.]

Faire venir l'eau au moulin = To bring grist to the mill.

Faire venir l'eau à la bouche = To make one's mouth water.

**L'eau va toujours au moulin* = Property always goes to those who have some already; Money makes money; Nothing succeeds like success.

[Also: *L'eau va à la rivière.*

German: 'Wo Geld ist, kommt Geld hin.']

D'ici là il passera bien de l'eau sous le pont = It will be a long time before that happens.

Mettre de l'eau dans son vin = (fig.) To come down a peg.

**L'eau qui tombe goutte à goutte cave la pierre* = Dropping water will wear away a stone.

[Ovid, *P* 4. 10. 5, begins a line with 'Gutta cavat lapidem', an abbreviation of the proverb 'Gutta cavat lapidem non vi sed saepe cadendo'.

'Stillicidi casus lapidem cavat.'—Lucretius, i. 313.]

Eau. (*cont.*) **Une goutte d'eau suffit pour faire déborder un vase plein* = The last straw breaks the camel's back.

Nager entre deux eaux = (lit.) To swim under water; (fig.) To run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

Faire eau (of boats) = To spring a leak.

Faire de l'eau (of boats) = To take in fresh water.

Laissez couler l'eau = Do not be anxious about what cannot be helped; Don't cry over spilt milk.

Cela s'en est allé en eau de boudin = That collapsed utterly, came to nothing.

[The more correct form is *s'en aller en aune de boudin*, alluding to Perrault's tale of *Les Souhaits ridicules*.]

Un fripon de la plus belle eau = A scoundrel of the first water; An out-and-out rogue.

Échapper. *Ce mot m'est échappé* = That word escaped me inadvertently (i. e. I did not mean to say it).

Ce mot m'a échappé = I have forgotten that word.

Il a échappé tout juste = He escaped by the skin of his teeth.

Échéant. *Le cas échéant* = Should such a thing happen; If such should be the case.

Échelle. *Faire la courte échelle à quelqu'un* = To allow some one to climb on one's shoulders to scale a height; To give a lift to some one.

Après lui il faut tirer l'échelle = One cannot do better than he has (*or*, does); He beats the record, takes the cake.

École. *Faire l'école buissonnière* = To play truant.

[i. e. to go bird's-nesting in the bushes rather than go to school.]

Faire une école = To make a blunder.

Faire école = To found (*or*, to be a leader of) a school of art, literature, music, &c.

Écolier. *Faire un tour d'écolier* = To play a schoolboy trick.

Faire une faute d'écolier = To make a foolish mistake.

Économie. **Il n'y a pas de petites économies* = A penny saved is a penny earned ; Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves.

[Also : *Les petites économies font les bonnes maisons.*]

Écorcher. **Jamais beau parler n'écorcha la langue* = Fair words never did harm ; Civility costs nothing.

['Fair words never hurt the tongue.'—Ben Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, *Eastward Ho*, iv. 1.]

Il écorche le français = He murders French.

Il écorche l'anguille par la queue = He sets (goes) the wrong way to work.

À cet hôtel on écorche les gens = They fleece you at that hotel.

Écorner. *Il fait un vent à écorner* (or, *décorner*) *un bœuf* = The wind is enough to blow one's head off ; It is blowing great guns.

Écot. *Chacun a payé son écot* = Each paid for himself.

Écouter. *Comme cet homme s'écoute !* = What care that man takes of himself !

C'est un écoute-s'il-pleut = He is a man who cannot be relied upon.

[Mills were so called which depended for their motive power on rain-water and consequently were continually stopping.]

Il n'écoute que d'une oreille = He pays very little attention.

Écrire. *Écrire de bonne encre à quelqu'un* = To write to some one in strong terms.

Écuelle. *Être propre comme une écuelle de chat* = To be very dirty.

Écurie. **Fermer l'écurie quand les chevaux sont dehors* = To lock the stable-door when the steed is stolen.

C'est un cheval à l'écurie = It is a white elephant.

Effet. *Cela fait de l'effet* = That looks well ; That is showy ; That makes a fine display.

Cela me fait cet effet = That seems so to me.

Égal. *Cela m'est égal* = It is all the same to me ; I don't care.

Égal. (*cont.*) *Tout lui est égal* = Everything is the same to him.

D'égal à égal = 1. Between equals. 2. On equal terms.

C'est égal, je me suis joliment amusé = Anyhow (All the same), I enjoyed myself very much.

Église. **Près de l'église, loin de Dieu* = The nearer the church, the farther from God.

Gueux comme un rat d'église = As poor as a church mouse.

Élan. *Prendre son élan* = To take one's spring (before a jump).

Emballer. *Il s'emballe facilement* = He quickly loses his temper.

[*Emballer* means to pack up, hence to go off quickly into a rage; when speaking of a horse it means 'to bolt'.]

Embarras. *Ne faites donc pas tant d'embarras* = Do not make such a fuss.

Ce n'est pas l'embarras = There is no great difficulty in it; After all; For the matter of that.

Elle n'a que l'embarras du choix = She has only too much to choose from.

Emblée. *La loi passa d'emblée* = The law passed straight off, by acclamation.

Il a été reçu d'emblée = He passed his examination the first time he went up, without any difficulty.

Embrasser. **Qui trop embrasse mal étreint* = Grasp all, lose all.

['Qui totum vult totum perdit.'—Publilius Syrus.
Qui tout convoite tout perd.
L'avarice rompt le sac.
Too much is stark naught.
'Oh the little more, and how much it is!
And the little less, and what worlds away!'
Browning, *Dramatic Lyrics*,
'*By the Fireside*', 39.]

Employer. *Il a employé le vert et le sec pour y parvenir* = He left no stone unturned to secure success; He has used every possible means to succeed. (See *Ciel.*)

Emporter. *S'emporter comme une soupe au lait* = To be very hasty-tempered.

Ne faites pas attention à ses menaces, autant en emporte le vent = Pay no attention to his threats, they are as light as air.

Emporter ses cliques et ses claques = To clear off, bag and baggage.

C'est une réponse à l'emporte-pièce = It is a very cutting answer, and to the point.

[*À l'emporte pièce* = Cut out by a machine-punch.]

Cela m'emporte la bouche = It burns my mouth (i. e. it is too highly spiced).

Empressé. *Il fait l'empressé auprès de sa vieille tante* = He pays marked attention to his old aunt.

Emprunter. *Elle a un air emprunté* = She looks awkward, embarrassed, affected.

**Ne choisit pas qui emprunte* = Beggars cannot be choosers.

['Qui empruncte ne choisist mie.'
Maistre Pierre Pathelin, 79.]

Encensoir. *Casser le nez à quelqu'un à coups d'encensoir* = To flatter some one fulsomely to his face. (See *Casser*.)

Enchère. *Payer la folle enchère* = To pay for one's rashness, for one's folly.

[When a man bids at an auction and does not pay for what he has bought, the lot is put up again and he has to pay the difference (if any) between the price it is then sold at and the price he bid for it.]

Enchère au rabais = A Dutch auction.

Enclume. *Je suis entre l'enclume et le marteau* = I am in a dilemma; I am between the devil and the deep sea; I have to run the gauntlet.

**Il frappe toujours sur la même enclume* = He is always harping on the same string.

**À dure enclume marteau de plume* = The strokes of adversity leave the wise man unmoved.

['Impavidum ferient ruinae.'—Horace, *Odes*, iii. 3, 8.]

Encourager. *Pour encourager les autres* = Just to spur (*or*, cheer) on the others.

[This saying is usually used in reference to something that is least likely to encourage any one. It is found first in Voltaire's *Candide* (chap. xxiii): 'Il est bon de tuer un amiral de temps en temps pour encourager les autres.' He refers to the execution of Admiral Byng in 1757.]

Endimancher. *Des gens endimanchés* = Folk rigged out in their Sunday best.

Endroit. *Frapper au bon endroit* = To touch the right spring; To hit the right nail on the head; To hit the mark; To touch the spot.

Enfant. *Des enfants perdus* (military) = A forlorn hope.

Un enfant terrible = A child who tells awkward truths.

[Gavarni, the caricaturist, published a series of sketches in 1865 under the title of 'Les Enfants Terribles'.]

Un bon enfant = A good sort.

Elle a deux enfants du premier lit = She has two children by her first husband.

C'est un enfant de la balle = He is his father's son; He follows the profession of his father. (See *Balle*.)

C'est bien l'enfant de sa mère = He is the very image of his mother.

Faire l'enfant = To behave childishly (on purpose).

Enfiler. *Je ne suis pas ici pour enfiler des perles* = I am not here to waste my time, to watch the clouds roll by.

Cela ne s'enfile pas comme des perles = That is by no means an easy matter.

Enfonceur. *C'est un enfonceur de portes ouvertes* = 1. He is a braggart. 2. He takes a deal of trouble to solve a difficulty which does not exist.

Engrenage. *Être pris dans l'engrenage* = To be caught in the toils.

Enlever. *On enleva les journaux comme au pain* = The papers sold like hot rolls, like wild-fire.

Ennemi. *Il n'y a pas de petit ennemi* = Every enemy is to be feared.

['Croire qu'un faible ennemi ne peut pas nuire, c'est croire qu'une étincelle ne peut pas causer un incendie.'—Sa'di.]

Enseigne. *Nous sommes logés à la même enseigne* = We are both in the same predicament, in the same boat.

['ἐν γὰρ τῷ αὐτῷ ἔσμεν σκάμματι.'
St. Clement's Epistle to the Church of Corinth.]

A telles enseignes = In proof whereof; So much so that.

Je ne le croirai qu'à bonnes enseignes = I shall only believe it upon good authority.

Entendre. *Il entend à demi-mot* = He can take a hint.

**À bon entendeur, salut* = A word to the wise is enough; *Verbum sap.*

['À bon entendeur ne fault qu'une parole.'
Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, v. 7.]

Il n'entend pas de cette oreille = (fig.) He will listen to nothing on that subject.

Vous ne vous y entendez pas = You do not know how to set about it, how to manage it.

Il n'entend pas raillerie là-dessus = 1. You must not speak lightly of that before him. 2. He will not be trifled with on that point.

Entendre la raillerie = To know how to be witty; To be a good hand at chaff.

Entendre raillerie = Not to be offended at a joke; To stand chaff well.

Il n'y entend pas malice = 1. He does not mean any harm; He means no more than he says. 2. He takes it innocently.

Faire l'entendu = To put on a knowing look.

**Il n'est pire sourd que celui qui ne veut pas entendre* = None so deaf as those who will not hear.

Il s'y entend comme à ramer des choux = He can no more do it than fly; He cannot make head or tail of it.

Entente. *Un mot à double entente* = A word (*or*, remark) with two meanings.

Une entente cordiale = A hearty good understanding.

[The first occurrence of this phrase is said to be on Dec. 27, 1843, by King Louis-Philippe: 'La sincère amitié qui m'unit à la reine de la Grande Bretagne et la cordiale entente qui existe entre mon gouvernement et le sien.' But the English Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, had shortly before in Sept. 1843 used the phrase by accident in talking to M. de Jarnac, the French *Chargé d'Affaires*, at Haddo House. It was immediately welcomed by both countries and has been in constant use ever since.]

Enterrer. **Mieux vaut goujat debout qu'empereur enterré* = A living dog is better than a dead lion.

Envie. *J'ai bien envie d'aller à Paris avec vous* = I have a good mind to go to Paris with you.

Il ne porte envie à personne = He envies no one.

Il ne fait envie à personne = No one envies him.

Si l'envie m'en prend = If I feel inclined to do it.

Envoyer. *Je l'ai envoyé promener* (or, fam., *paître*) = I sent him about his business.

Épée. *C'est son épée de chevet* = 1. That is his trusty counsellor. 2. That is what he is always talking about.

[Literally, a sword that hung at the head of a bed to guard one from nocturnal attacks.

'Voilà leur épée de chevet, de l'argent.'

MOLIÈRE, *L'Avare*, iii. 5.]

Passer au fil de l'épée = To put to the sword.

**Qui porte épée porte paix* = One sword keeps another in its scabbard ; *Si vis pacem, para bellum.*

Épervier. **Mariage d'épervier, la femelle vaut mieux que le mâle* = The grey mare is the better horse.

Épine. *Tirer une épine du pied à quelqu'un* = To take a thorn out of some one's side ; To get some one over a difficulty.

Épingle. *Il est toujours tiré à quatre épingles* = He always looks as if he came out of a band-box ; He is always dressed up to the nines.

Épingle. (*cont.*) *J'ai tiré mon épingle du jeu* = I have saved my stake; I got well out of a bad job.

[Une locution qui vient d'un jeu de petites filles: elles mettent des épingles dans un rond, et, avec une balle qui, lancée contre le mur, revient vers le rond, elles essayent d'en faire sortir les épingles: quand on fait sortir sa mise, on dit qu'on retire son épingle du jeu.]

Une épingle par jour fait huit sous par an = A pin a day is a groat a year.

Éponge. *Passons l'éponge là-dessus* = Let us say no more about it; Let us forget all about it; Let bygones be bygones.

Épreuve. *C'est un ami à toute épreuve* = He is a well-tried, faithful, trusty friend.

Épuiser. *L'édition est épuisée* = The book is out of print.

Équipée. *Oh! la belle équipée!* = Here's a pretty kettle of fish!

Ergot. *Se dresser sur ses ergots* = To stand on one's dignity.

Espoir. *L'espoir fait vivre* = We live on hope.

[Pope says: 'Hope springs eternal in the human breast', but the French say: 'A force de vivre d'espérance on meurt désespéré.']

Esprit. *Je suis bien dans son esprit* = He has a good opinion of me.

Où avez-vous donc l'esprit? = What are you thinking of?

Il a l'esprit aux talons = He shines at the wrong end; He is not witty.

Il a l'esprit de l'escalier = He never thinks of the right answer at the proper moment.

[i.e. He thinks of the right answer going down the staircase, after leaving the room.]

Faire de l'esprit = To try to be witty.

Il a de l'esprit comme quatre = He is very witty.

L'esprit court les rues = Wit is a drug in the market.

Avoir l'esprit bien fait = To be good-tempered.

Esprit. (*cont.*) *Avoir l'esprit de travers* = To have an awkward temper.

Les grands esprits se rencontrent = Great wits always jump together; We both said the same thing at the same moment.

Il n'a pas l'esprit de suite = He is not persevering enough; He sticks at nothing long.

Essuyer. *Essuyer les plâtres* = To move into a newly-built house before the walls are dry; (fig.) To experience the disadvantages of a beginning.

Estomac. *Avoir l'estomac dans les talons* = To be as hungry as a hunter.

État. *Nous faisons peu d'état de cet homme* = We consider that man very little; We take little account of that man.

De son état = By profession, by trade.

Je l'ai mis hors d'état de vous nuire = I have put it out of his power to harm you.

Pour un rien il se met dans tous ses états (fam.) = He gets very excited over a mere trifle.

L'État, c'est moi! = The State? *I* am the State!

[Chéruel, *Histoire de l'Administration monarchique en France*, Livre II, p. 32 (published in 1855). He attributes these words to Louis XIV, who, when sixteen, addressed them to the President of the Parlement of Paris, April 13, 1655, thus striking at once the keynote of his autocratic rule. Although there is no contemporary evidence that Louis XIV ever uttered these words, they have stuck to him as indicative of his feelings. (See *L'Histoire de Mme. de Maintenon* by the Duc de Noailles.) The King has been fathered with other autocratic sayings; e. g. *J'ai failli attendre* to the unpunctual courtier, *J'ai fait dix mécontents et un ingrat* on making a new appointment. He also said: *L'exactitude est la politesse des rois*, to which saying Sydney Smith added: 'It is also the duty of gentlemen and the necessity of men of business.']

Étoffe. *Il y a de l'étoffe dans cet enfant* = There is grit in that boy.

Étoile. *Voir des étoiles* (*la lune*) *en plein midi* = To receive a violent blow in the eye, so as to 'see stars'.

Étourdir. *Étourdir la grosse faim* = To take the edge off one's appetite.

Être. *Je n'y suis pour personne* = I am not at home to anybody.

Je n'y suis pour rien = I have nothing to do with it; I have no hand in it.

Vous n'y êtes pas = You do not understand it; 'You are out of it.'

J'y suis, j'y reste = Here I am, here I stop.

[This is the well-known reply of Marshal MacMahon to General Biddulph after his capture of the Malakoff, Sept. 9, 1855, when he was asked if he could keep his position.]

Cette fois, ça y est = Now it is done, and no mistake.

Je n'en suis plus = I am no longer one of the party; I no longer belong to it.

Il n'en a rien été = Nothing came of it.

Il en a été pour sa peine = He had his trouble for nothing.

Il en sera ce qu'il vous plaira = It shall be just as you please.

Je ne sais plus où j'en suis = 1. I have lost the place where I left off (in reading, &c.). 2. I do not know what I am about.

Je suis très bien avec lui = I am on very good terms with him.

On y est très bien = They do you very well there; The accommodation there is very good.

Êtes-vous de la noce? = Are you one of the wedding party?

Êtes-vous des nôtres? = Are you one of our party? Are you one of us? Do you think as we do?

Voilà ce que c'est que de se mettre en colère = That is the consequence of losing one's temper.

Je suis à l'étroit = I am cramped for room.

**On ne peut pas être et avoir été* = One cannot have one's cake and eat it. (See *Drap.*)

Étrenne. *Tu n'en auras pas l'étrenne* = You will not be the first to use it.

Étrier. *Il a le pied à l'étrier* = He is ready to start.

Buvez le coup de l'étrier = Drink the stirrup-cup.

Étrier. *À franc étrier* = At full speed. (See *Bride* and *Train.*)
(*cont.*)

Évangile. *C'est l'Évangile* (or, *c'est parole d'Évangile*) = It is gospel truth.

Événement. *Les événements à venir se font pressentir* = 'Coming events cast their shadows before.'
[Campbell, *Lochiel's Warning.*]

Excuser. **Qui s'excuse, s'accuse* = If you try to excuse yourself you practically acknowledge that you have done wrong; A guilty conscience needs no accuser.
['Nescio quid peccati portat secum haec purgatio.'
Terence, *Heaut.* iv. 1. 12.]

Excusez du peu (ironic) = Only that? How modest!

Exemple. *Il prêcha d'exemple* = He practised what he preached; He set the example.
**Peu de leçons, beaucoup d'exemples* = Precepts lead, examples draw; It is easiest learning at another's cost.

Expérience. **Expérience passe science* = Experience is the best master; *Experientia docet.*
['Experience is the best of schoolmasters, only the school fees are heavy.'—Carlyle, *Misc. Essays*, i. 137.]

Extrême. *Les extrêmes se touchent* = Extremes meet; Too far east is west; Too much care may be as bad as downright negligence.

F.

Fabrique. *C'est de sa fabrique* = That is of his invention.
Marque de fabrique = Trade-mark.

Face. *Il fera face à tout* = He will meet every demand.
Ce portrait est pris de face = That portrait is taken full face.
Jouer à pile ou face = To play at heads or tails, pitch and toss.
Il le regarda bien en face = He looked him straight in the face.

Façon. *Donner un ouvrage à façon* = To put out a job to be done.

Façon. (*cont.*) *On travaille à façon* (of small tailors, &c.) = People's own materials made up.

C'est un conte de sa façon = It is a story of his own invention.

Maintenant qu'il est riche, il s'en donne de la bonne façon = Now he is rich, he refuses himself nothing.

Je lui dirai ma façon de penser = I'll give him a piece of my mind.

Une façon de parler = A form of speech ; A way of speaking (not to be taken literally).

[e. g. 'Quand je dis qu'il n'est jamais venu en Angleterre c'est une façon de parler, car il a passé huit jours à Douvres il y a dix ans.']

Cet homme n'a ni mine ni façon = That man has neither grace nor good looks ; That man is as awkward as he is ugly.

C'est lui qui fait les sottises et c'est moi qui en paye la façon = He commits the mistakes and I have to pay for them.

Il a bonne façon = He has good style ; He is well got up.

De toute façon il a tort = At any rate he is wrong ; Whichever way you look at it, he is wrong.

Sans façon = Without ceremony, without fuss.

De façon ou d'autre = Somehow or other.

Après bien des façons elle a consenti de venir = After a great deal of fuss she agreed to come.

Fagot. *C'est un vrai fagot d'épines* = He is a regular bear.

**Il y a fagots et fagots* = There are men and men ; All men are not alike.

[Molière, *Le Médecin malgré lui*, i. 6.]

Sentir le fagot = 1. To be tainted with heresy (obsolete). 2. Not to be quite honest.

Fagoter. *Comme vous voilà fagotée !* = How awkwardly you are dressed ! What a fright (*or*, dowdy) you look !

['Pour moi, quand une femme a le don de se taire,
Eût-elle en vrai magot tout le corps fagoté,
Je lui voudrais donner le prix de la beauté.'
Corneille, *Le Menteur*, l. 219.]

Faillir. *J'ai failli tomber* = I very nearly fell.

Faim. *C'est la faim qui épouse la soif* = They are both very poor; It is one beggar marrying another.

**La faim chasse le loup hors du bois* = Hunger tames the lion; Hunger will break through stone walls.

Faire. *Rien n'y fait* = Nothing has any effect upon him (*or*, on it); It is all of no use.

Comment est-il fait ? = What sort of a man is he ?

**Ce qui est fait est fait* = It is no good crying over spilt milk; What is done cannot be undone.

[Also: *Inutile de pleurer, ça ne changera rien.*]

**On ne peut faire qu'en faisant* = Practice makes perfect.

Faire la Saint-Lundi = To do no work on Monday; To take Monday off. (See *Lundi.*)

[Colloquially: *Faire le lundi.*]

Tâchez de faire quelques provisions = Try and collect some provisions.

Faire dix ans de travaux forcés = To undergo ten years' penal servitude.

Il est bon de se faire à la fatigue = It is good to accustom oneself to fatigue.

Coquelin fait le rôle principal = Coquelin is taking the principal part.

On le fait riche = He is said to be rich.

Cela ne me fait ni chaud ni froid = It is all the same to me; I am quite indifferent about it.

Je n'ai que faire de vos conseils = I do not care a jot for your advice; I do not want your advice.

Je ne sais que faire = I do not know what to do.

**Qui bien fera, bien* (*se*) *trouvera* = Who works well will have a good reward.

Il ne faut pas me la faire (pop.) = You must not try that on with me.

Combien faites-vous cette étoffe ? = How much are you asking for this stuff ?

Faire. (*cont.*)

Je fais fi des mauvaises langues = I don't care a rap for slanderers.

Il aime qu'on fasse cas de lui = He likes to be made a fuss of.

Il fait bien son chemin = He is getting on in the world.

Ils ne font qu'un = They are hand and glove together.

Cela fait beaucoup = That makes a great difference; It is rather much.

Cela vous fait-il quelque chose? = Does it matter to you?

Cela me fait sortir des gonds = That exasperates me.

Il faut faire mousser sa marchandise = One must puff one's goods.

Qu'est-ce que cela me fait? = What is that to me?

Faire huit kilomètres à pied, à cheval, en voiture = To walk, ride, drive, five miles.

Le vert fait bien avec le rose = Green goes well with pink; Pink and green are fit for a queen.

Faire des siennes = To be at one's old tricks.

Il n'en fait qu'à sa volonté = He is self-willed.

C'est à faire à vous de réussir = You are the man to succeed.

C'en est fait de lui = He is done for; It is all up with him.

Ce qui est fait n'est pas à faire = Better to finish it now than to leave it.

Ce n'est ni fait ni à faire = It is done, but badly (in a slovenly fashion).

Il fait cher vivre à Londres = Living in London is dear.

Que faire? = What am I (*or*, are we) to do? What is to be done?

Pourquoi faire? = What for?

Comment faire? = What is to be done?

Que voulez-vous que j'y fasse? = How can I help it?

Faire. (*cont.*) What would you have me do? It is no business of mine.

Je ne saurais qu'y faire = I cannot help it.

**À chose faite point de remède* = What is done cannot be undone.

Laissez-le faire = Do not interfere with him.

Si faire se peut = If possible.

Cela ne fait rien = That does not matter.

Il n'en fera rien = He will do nothing of the sort.

Je m'y fais = I am getting used to it.

C'est bien fait = It serves him (*or*, her, you) right.

Quel temps fait-il? = What is the weather like?

Quel temps il fait! = What weather this is!

Paris ne s'est pas fait en un jour = Rome was not built in a day.

Il s'est fait jardinier = He became a gardener.

Elle se fait vieille = She is getting old.

Il se fait tard = It is getting late.

Pour se faire la main = To get one's hand in (i. e. to get accustomed to the work).

Se faire jour à travers la foule = To force one's way through the crowd.

Je me fais fort de le faire = I feel quite confident of doing it.

Coquelin sait le mieux se faire une tête = Coquelin is the cleverest at altering his features, at making up.

Cela se fait maintenant = That is the fashion now.

Cela ne se fait pas = That is not proper; That is not the correct thing; It's not done.

Faire le grand seigneur = To play the lord; To be a bit of a swell.

Il ne faut pas s'en faire = You must not worry about it; Don't you worry!

[*S'en faire = se faire de la bile* or *du mauvais sang.*]

Faiseur. *C'est un faiseur d'embarras* = He is a fussy personage.

Fait. *Cela est de mon fait* = That is my doing.

Venons au fait = Let us come to the point.

Mettez-moi au fait de ce qui s'est passé = Tell me what happened.

Il lui a dit son fait = He told him what he thought of him (*not* complimentary); He gave him a bit of his mind.

Si fait! = Yes indeed! On the contrary!

Cette place est votre fait = That situation is just the thing for you.

Je suis sûr de mon fait = I am sure of what I am saying; I know what I am about.

C'est un fait accompli = It is done and cannot be undone.

Travailler à prix fait (or, *à forfait*) = To work at an agreed price; To work by the piece.

Prendre quelqu'un sur le fait = To take any one in the act.

Il a pris fait et cause pour moi = He stood up for me; He took my part.

On épie ses faits et gestes = They spy upon his every act.

Falloir. *L'homme qu'il faut* = The very man (for a post).

Il le faut = It must be so.

Il fallait voir comme il était content = You should have seen how happy he was.

Peu s'en fallut qu'il ne fût reçu = He was all but successful; He failed for a few marks.

[Latin: 'Haud multum abfuit quin . . .']

C'est un homme comme il faut = He is a perfect gentleman.

C'est un homme comme il en *faut* = He is one of the right sort.

[Sometimes in bad sense: He is the sort of man we want to do that dirty work.]

C'est un homme comme il en faudrait beaucoup = I wish more men were like him (because of his straightforward or courageous nature).

Falloir. (*cont.*) *S'il n'est pas un fripon, il ne s'en faut guère* = If he is not a rascal, he is precious near it.

Il s'en faut beaucoup que l'un ait autant de mérite que l'autre = There is a great difference in merit between the two.

Il s'en faut de *beaucoup que leur nombre soit complet* = Their number is far from being complete.

[The former of these two idioms should refer to quality, the latter to quantity.]

Farine. *Des gens de même farine* = Persons of the same kidney (generally in a bad sense); People tarred with the same brush.

[St. Jerome wrote: 'Istius farinae homines sunt admodum gloriosi.' Compare: 'Arcades ambo.'—Virgil, *Ecl.* vii. 4. (See *Couvercle.*)]

Fat. *'Le bruit est pour le fat, la plainte est pour le sot,*
L'honnête homme trompé s'éloigne et ne dit mot'
= Rows are for muffs, 'tis only fools complain.
The gentleman deceived will grin and bear the pain.

[La Noue, *La Coquette corrigée*, i. 2 (1756).
A favourite quotation of Macaulay's; see *Journal* for Feb. 15, 1851.]

Faute. *Rien ne vous fera faute* = You will want for nothing.

Il ne se fait faute de rien = He denies himself nothing.

C'est une faute d'inattention = It is a slip.

C'est une faute d'impression = It is a misprint.

Il ne se fait pas faute de se plaindre = He complains freely.

Faute de mieux = For want of something better.

Fauteuil. *Il gagna la course dans un fauteuil* = He won the race hands down.

Faux. *Chanter faux* = To sing out of tune.

Faire un faux pas = (lit.) To stumble; (fig.) To make a slip; To commit a mistake.

Vous faites fausse route = You are taking the wrong road; You are on the wrong track.

Faux. (*cont.*)

Cette poutre porte à faux = That beam does not rest properly on its support.

Cette remarque a porté à faux = That remark was not to the point, was not conclusive.

Faux comme un jeton = As false as Judas; As false as a die.

Je m'inscris en faux contre cette assertion = I emphatically deny the truth of that assertion.

Fée. *C'est la fée Carabosse* = She is an old hag.

Fêler. **Les pots félés sont ceux qui durent le plus* = The door with the creaking hinge hangs longest; The cracked pitcher goes oftenest to the well.

Femme. **Femme qui parle comme homme et geline qui chante comme coq ne sont bonnes à tenir* =

A whistling woman and a crowing hen
Are good for neither cocks nor men.

['C'est chose qui moult me deplaist,
Quand poule parle et coq se taist.'
Roman de la Rose.

'La poule ne doit pas chanter devant le coq.'
MOLIÈRE, *Les Femmes savantes*, v. 3.]

**Prends le premier conseil d'une femme et non le second* = A woman's instinct is better than her reason.

[Montaigne coined the phrase *l'esprit primesautier* to describe this feminine peculiarity of either seeing a thing at once or not at all.]

Femme sotte se connaît à la cotte = A foolish woman is known by her finery.

Ce que femme veut Dieu le veut = Woman must have her way.

**Souvent femme varie,*
Bien fol est qui s'y fie =

Between a woman's yes and no
There's no room for a pin to go.

A woman's mind
And winter wind
Change oft.

[These words are said to have been written by François I on two little leaded panes in his room at the castle of Chambord,

Femme. (*cont.*) about ten miles from Blois. Brantôme says that while talking with his sister, Marguerite d'Angoulême, he engraved the saying with a diamond ring. Report has it that Louis XIV broke the glass with his stick at the request of Mademoiselle de la Vallière. However that may be, the visitor to Chambord will see that the words have been rewritten on the window. Victor Hugo in *Le Roi s'amuse* (iv. 2) presents the king as singing these words, and Verdi adapted them in his *Rigoletto*: 'La donna è mobile'. They are but a variant of Virgil's 'Varium et mutabile semper femina' (*Aeneid*, iv. 569) translated by Conington, 'A woman's will is changeable and uncertain still'.]

Ciel pommelé et femme fardée ne sont pas de longue durée = A mackerel sky, not long wet and not long dry.

Cherchez la femme = A woman is generally at the bottom of every villainy (*or*, mystery).

[These words are imputed to Gabriel de Sartine, chief of police in 1759. But their present popularity sprang from their occurrence in 'Les Mohicans de Paris' (iii. 6), a play by Alexandre Dumas père. They have been attributed to Fouché, to Talleyrand (of course), and to many others. Their first appearance we know of is in Juvenal vi. 242. A similar idea is found in Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (letter 24).]

Autant chanter 'femme sensible' = You might just as well ask for the moon; What you ask is impossible.

[This is an abbreviated form of 'Autant chanter *femme sensible* sur l'air de Malbrouk', which meant, 'You are destroying the effect of sentimental words by singing them to a comic tune'. *Femme sensible* was a well-known song from *Ariodant*, an opera by Méhul, and for many years the song was a favourite in drawing-rooms and concert-halls. Malbrouk is the same tune as *For he's a jolly good fellow*. Gradually the last four words were omitted and the saying obtained its present meaning.]

Fenêtre. *Il faut passer par là ou par la fenêtre* = It is absolutely inevitable.

Fer. **Il faut battre le fer pendant qu'il est chaud* = You must strike while the iron is hot.

['Ce pendant que le fer est chault il le fault battre.'
RABELAIS, *Pantagruel*, ii. 31.]

Cela ne vaut pas les quatre fers d'un chien = That is not worth a rap, a fig (i. e. nothing, for a dog is not shod).

Il tomba les quatre fers en l'air = (lit.) He fell on his back; (fig.) He was struck all of a heap.

Fer. (*cont.*) *Il y a quelque fer qui loche* = There is a hitch somewhere. (See *Clocher.*)

Cela ne tient ni à fer ni à clou = That is hanging by a thread.

Férir. *Sans coup férir* = Without striking a blow.

Ferré. *Il est ferré sur la géographie* = He is well up in geography.
[More fam. *calé en géographie.*]

Feston. '*Ce ne sont que festons, ce ne sont qu'astragales*' = He goes too much into details; He forgets the main point and rambles off on subsidiary by-paths.
[The French is a well-known line from Boileau's *Art poétique* (i. 56) and is a parody of one in the third canto of Scudéri's *Alaric*: 'Ce ne sont que festons, ce ne sont que couronnes.' Boileau is here protesting against the long-winded and useless descriptions which were then fashionable in certain styles of French poetry. The description of the architecture of a palace in *Alaric* extends to over 300 lines. Victor Hugo (*Le Rhin*, lettre xi) refers to Boileau: 'J'ai peur de vous fatiguer avec mes festons et mes astragales.']

Fête. **Ce n'est pas tous les jours fête* = Christmas comes but once a year.

Faire fête à quelqu'un = To welcome some one heartily.

Je me fais une fête de passer huit jours à la campagne = I look forward with pleasure to the idea of spending a week in the country.

Après la fête on gratte la tête = After the dinner comes the reckoning.

Feu. *Il n'a ni feu ni lieu* = He has neither house nor home.

L'ennemi mit le pays à feu et à sang = The enemy put the country to fire and sword.

Je n'y ai vu que du feu = It was impossible for me to find out how the thing was done (as it was done so quickly); It was done so quickly (*or*, cleverly) that I could not make head or tail of it.

Vous me faites mourir à petit feu = You are killing me by inches; You are torturing me to death.

Feu. (*cont.*)

Il ne faut pas jouer avec le feu = One should not play with edged tools.

Il n'est feu que de bois vert = None are so active as the young.

Il jette feu et flamme = He frets and fumes; He is in a great rage.

Faire feu des quatre pieds = To strain every nerve.

Ce n'est qu'un feu de paille = It is only a flash in the pan; It will not last.

Il a jeté tout son feu = 1. His anger is over now. 2. He has used up all his ideas.

C'est le feu et l'eau = They are as opposite as fire and water.

Faire feu = To fire (rifles, guns).

Faire du feu = To light a fire.

Faire feu qui dure = To live a long life.

Fève.

**Il a trouvé la fève au gâteau* = He has hit the mark; He has made a lucky discovery.

[It was (and is still in many places) the custom to hide a bean in the cake on Twelfth Night, and the person who found it was the king of the revels.

'Pensent avoir trouvé la fève du gasteau.'

RÉGNIER, *Satires*, vii.]

**Donner un pois pour avoir une fève* = To give a sprat to catch a herring. (See *Œuf.*)

Rendre fève pour pois = To give tit for tat.

Fier.

Fier comme Artaban (or, *comme un Écossais*, or, *comme un chat amadoué*) = As proud as a peacock, as Punch.

[Artaban was the hero of *Cléopâtre*, a romance by La Calprenède, a Gascon. The phrase is also said to be derived from Artabanes, King of Parthia: 'Plus fier que tous les Artabans.'—ROSTAND, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, i. 2. German: 'Er bläst sich auf wie ein Frosch.']

Fièvre.

**Tomber de fièvre en chaud mal* (or, *de la poêle dans la braise, de Charybde en Scylla*) = To fall out of the frying-pan into the fire.

['Incidit in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim.'—PHILIPPE GAUTHIER DE CHÂTILLON, *Gesta Alexandri*, v. 297 (1487). Compare HOMER, *Od.* xii. 85.

Fièvre. (*cont.*) 'Thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother.' SHAKESPEARE, *Merchant of Venice*, iii. 5.
The fabled monsters, the rock Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis, are thought to be poetical figures for the strong currents of the Straits of Messina.

'Souvent la peur d'un mal vous conduit dans un pire.'—BOILEAU, *Art poétique*, i. 64.]

Figue. **Moitié figue, moitié raisin* = 1. Partly willingly, partly by force. 2. Half one thing and half another. 3. Half in jest, half in earnest.

[This expression is often used of a remark that may be complimentary or not.]

Fil. *Je lui donnerai du fil à retordre* = I will cut out his work for him; I will give him a deal of trouble.

Ce sont des finesses cousues de fil blanc = Those tricks are easily seen through.

**À toile ourdie Dieu envoie le fil* = God sends thread for a begun web; Make a beginning, God will provide for the ending.

Au fil de l'eau = With the stream.

Mettre au fil de l'épée = Put to the edge of the sword.

Filer. *Filer à l'anglaise* = To leave without saying good-bye, without attracting attention; To take French leave.

**Du temps que Berthe filait* = When Adam delved and Eve span; In the good old times.

[La reine Berthe was the wife of Pepin le Bref and mother of Charlemagne. She was known as *Berthe au grand pied* from her club-foot. The English is attributed to John Ball, a priest, who, during the Peasants' Revolt, addressed the rioters on Blackheath, June 12, 1381.]

Filer doux = To sing small.

Il faut filer (or, *Filons!*) (fam.) = We must be off, trot off.

Fille. *La plus belle fille du monde ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a* = No man can give more than he has; A man cannot give what he has not got.

**Quand on a des filles, on est toujours berger* =

My son is my son till he gets him a wife,
My daughter's my daughter all the days of her life.

Fille. (*cont.*) **Fille oisive, à mal pensive* = An idle brain is the devil's workshop.

['For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.'
ISAAC WATTS, *Divine Songs*, XX.]

Fille trop vue, robe trop vêtue,
N'est pas chère tenue =

A maid often seen, a garment often worn,
Are disesteemed and held in scorn.

Fils. *Il est bien le fils de son père* = He is a chip of the old block.

Être le fils de ses œuvres = To be a self-made man.

['Faber est suae quisque fortunae.'
SALLUST, *De republica ordinanda*, i. 1.
'Chacun est artisan de sa propre fortune.'
RÉGNIER, *Satires*, xiii. 10.
'Je ne dois qu'à moi seul toute ma renommée.'
CORNEILLE, *Excuse à Ariste.*]

Fin (subst.) *À la fin vous voilà!* = Here you are at last!

À la fin des fins (or, *en fin finale*) *vous nous direz quelque chose* = At last you will tell us something.

À telle fin que de raison = At all events; At any rate.

**La fin couronne l'œuvre* = The end crowns all; All's well that ends well.

Qui veut la fin veut les moyens = Where there is a will there is a way; If you want the end you must not stick at the means.

**La fin justifie les moyens* = Success justifies the means by which it has been attained.

Il touche à sa fin = He is nearing his end; It is nearly over.

**En toutes choses il faut considérer la fin* = We must always look to the end; Look before you leap; *Respice finem.*

[LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, iii. 5. The motto of the Kennedy family is 'Look to the end', or 'Avise la fin'.]

C'est fin de siècle = That is smart, up to date.

[This expression came to the front in Paris about the time of the

Fin (subst.) (*cont.*) 1889 Exhibition. Its first appearance is said to have been the title of a play by Micard and de Jouvenot, presented at the Château d'Eau, April 17, 1888. In 1890 appeared a play called 'Paris fin de siècle', by Blum and Toché, in which occur these words: 'C'est un mot nouveau qui dit très bien ce qu'il veut dire. Le siècle n'a plus que dix ans à vivre, et, vois-tu, il veut les passer gaiement.' The saying, however, has lost its sense, and is becoming obsolete now that a new century has begun.]

Fin (adj.) *Il sait le fort et le fin de son art* = He knows every trick of his trade.

Plus fin que lui n'est pas bête = He who can take him in is no fool.

J'arrive du fin fond de l'Afrique = I have come from the very depths of Africa.

C'est une fine mouche (or, *lame*) = He is a cunning fellow, a sly dog, a dark horse, a deep one. (See *Compère.*)

C'est fin contre fin = It is diamond cut diamond.

[Also: *Fin contre fin ne vaut rien pour doublure.*]

Fin contre fin, gare la bombe = 'When Greeks joined Greeks, then was the tug of war.'

[Nathaniel Lee, *Alexander the Great*, iv. 2.]

Dites-nous le fin mot = Tell us the secret.

Il a le nez fin = 1. He has a good nose. 2. He is far-sighted, sagacious.

Jouer au plus fin = To vie in cunning.

Finir. *Ce sont des disputes à n'en plus finir* = Those are endless quarrels.

Flamber. *C'est un homme flambé* = He is a ruined man, a lost man.

Flamberge. *Il met flamberge au vent* = He draws his sword.

[Flamberge was the sword of Renaud de Montauban and is often referred to in the Chansons de geste.]

Flanc. *Il s'est battu les flancs pour rien* = He gave himself all that trouble for nothing.

Il est sur le flanc = He is laid up, on his back.

Prêter le flanc à des reproches = To lay oneself open to reproaches.

Flétrir. **De rose flétrie nul ne se soucie* = The fading rose has no suitor.

Fleur. *C'est la fine fleur de l'armée* = It is the cream (pick, pink) of the army.

L'affaire passa à fleur de corde = The matter only just succeeded.

Les yeux à fleur de tête = Goggle eyes (i. e. on a level with the cheek-bone and forehead).

À fleur de terre = On a level (*or*, flush) with the ground.

À la fleur de l'âge = In the prime of life.

Il a les nerfs à fleur de peau = His nerves are always on the twitch ; He is extremely sensitive.

Fleurette. *Conter fleurettes* = To say soft nothings.

Flûte. **Ce qui vient de la flûte s'en va au tambour* = Lightly come, lightly go ; What is dishonestly acquired is easily dissipated ; Ill got, ill gone.

[Also : *Ce qui vient de flot s'en retourne de marée.*
'Male parta male dilabuntur.'—Naevius, *Danae.*
German : 'Wie gewonnen, so zerronnen.']

Foi. *C'est un homme sans foi ni loi* = He is a man without honour or honesty.

Il est de peu de foi = He is not to be trusted.

Ses ouvrages en font foi = His works prove it.

**C'est avec la bonne foi* (or, *l'honnêteté*) *qu'on va le plus loin* = Honesty is the best policy.

[German : 'Ehrlich währt am längsten.']

La foi du charbonnier = Blind faith.

Je ne puis ajouter foi à ce qu'il dit = I cannot believe what he says.

Ma foi ! = Upon my word !

Foin. *Mettre du foin dans ses bottes* = To feather one's nest.

[Literally, to place hay in one's wooden shoes to keep one's feet warm. Another saying is *Mettre du beurre dans ses épinards.*]

Avoir du foin dans ses bottes = To be well off.

Foin. (*cont.*) *Quand il n'y a pas de foin au râtelier, les chevaux se battent* = When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window.

['Sine Cerere et Libero friget Venus.'
TERENCE, *Eunuchus*, iv. 5.

Sans pain ni vin
L'amour n'est rien.

Without meat and drink, love is cold.
German: 'Liebe macht nicht satt.']

Folie. *Ce qui me lie, c'est ma folie* = Straw bands will tie a fool's hands.

La folie se gagne = One fool makes many.

Fond. *Je fais fond sur vous* = I rely on you.

Il sait cette langue à fond = He knows that language thoroughly.

Il est ruiné de fond en comble = He is utterly ruined.

Au fond, il a tort = He is wrong in reality.

Courir à fond de train = To run at the top of one's speed.

Article de fond = Leading article (in a newspaper).

Fonds. *Il possède une fortune en bien-fonds* = He has a fortune in landed property.

Il a placé son argent à fonds perdu = He sank his money in an annuity.

* *'Travaillez, prenez de la peine;*
C'est le fonds qui manque le moins' =
Work and take pains, *that* you can always do.

Hard work and pain
Are ne'er in vain.

[LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, v. 9.]

Fontaine. **Il ne faut pas dire, 'Fontaine, je ne boirai pas de ton eau'* = One must never be sure of not wanting some one (*or*, something); You never know what you may come to.

[Compare the proverb that Alfred de Musset took for the title of one of his Proverbes: 'Il ne faut jurer de rien.']

Force. *Tu me payeras de gré ou de force* = You shall pay me, whether you like it or not.

Hugo est un romantique dans toute la force du

Force. (*cont.*)

terme = Hugo is a romanticist in the full sense of the word.

Je suis à bout de force = I am exhausted, played out.

Je ne suis pas de votre force = (lit.) I am not so strong as you are; (fig.) I am no match for you.

Force m'est de partir = I am compelled to go.

Il faut à toute force l'empêcher de sortir = You must prevent him going out by all the means in your power; We must do all we can to prevent him going out.

Il y avait force badauds = A number of loafers were there.

**La force prime de droit* = Might is right. (See *Fort.*)

[Napoleon is fathered with 'Providence is always on the side of the heaviest battalions'. But it was Rabutin, Comte de Bussy, who wrote to the Comte de Limoges, Oct. 18, 1677: 'Dieu est d'ordinaire pour les gros escadrons contre les petits.'
The German 'Macht geht vor Recht' is said to have been used by Bismarck in 1863 and in 1870, although he always denied it. *Φημὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ εἶναι τὸ δίκαιον οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος ξυμφέρον.*—Plato, *Rep.* i. 12, 338 c.
'Deos fortioribus adesse.'—Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. 17.
'O that might should thus overcome right!'—*2 Henry IV*, v. 4.
'The winds and waves are always on the side of the ablest navigators.'—Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 58.]

C'est un joueur de première force = He is a first-rate player.

Force est restée à la loi = The police proved the stronger; Order was restored.

C'est un cas de force majeure = It is a case of absolute necessity; It is an utter impossibility.

[e.g. 'Le témoin n'a pu venir parce qu'il est dangereusement malade; son absence est due à un cas de force majeure.']

Faire force de voiles = To crowd on all sail.

Faire force de rames = To row with all one's might.

**Tout par amour, rien par force* = Sweet words will succeed where mere strength will fail; You may row your heart out if wind and tide are against you.

À force de travailler = By dint of working.

À force de bras = By strength of arm.

Force. (*cont.*) *De vive force* = By main force.

Un tour de force = A feat (of strength or skill).

Forêt. *C'est une vraie forêt de Bondy* = It's a regular den of thieves.

[Bondy, about seven miles to the north-east of Paris, was a noted resort of highwaymen, like Hounslow Heath.]

Forgeron. **À force de forger on devient forgeron* = Practice makes perfect; Drawn wells are seldom dry.

[Lat. *Fit fabricando faber.*]

Fort. *Cela est trop fort* (or, *raide*) = That is too bad; That is beyond a joke; That's a bit thick.

Cela est par trop fort = That is really too bad.

[This *par* is derived from the Latin intensive particle *per*, as in *perhorridus*. In French one finds such words as *parfaire*, *parachever*, and in Old French this prefix was separable. Thus, *tant il est parsage* might be written *tant il par est sage*. So, *Cela est par trop fort* = *Cela est trop parfort.*]

C'est un esprit fort = He is a freethinker.

Voilà qui est fort = That is rather strong.

Ça, ce n'est pas fort = That is very tame; There is not much in that.

À plus forte raison = All the more reason; *A fortiori.*

Il faut que je parle, c'est plus fort que moi = I must speak, I cannot help it.

Le plus fort est fait = The worst is over; The most difficult part is done.

Savoir le fort et le faible de l'affaire = To know the ins and outs of the matter.

Le fort portant le faible = One thing with another; On an average.

* '*La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure*' = Might is right; There is no arguing with a large fist. (See *Force.*)

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, i. 10, *Le loup et l'agneau.*]

Fort comme un Turc = As strong as a horse.

Fort. (*cont.*) *'Ou tôt ou tard, ou près ou loin,*
Le fort du faible a besoin' =
The lion had need of the mouse.
[GÉNIN, *Récréations*, ii. 250.]
Il a trouvé plus fort que lui = He has met more than his match.

Fortune. *Chacun a dans sa vie un souris de la fortune* = Fortune knocks once at every man's door.
La fortune rit aux sots = Fools have the best luck.
Voulez-vous accepter la fortune du pot? = Will you take pot-luck with us?
Faire contre fortune bon cœur = To bear up against misfortune; To make the best of a bad job; Set hard heart against hard hap.
['Rebus angustis animosus atque
Fortis appare.' HORACE, *Odes*, II. x. 21.]
Nul ne sait ce que fortune lui garde = There's no fleeing from fate.

Fossé. *Ce qui tombe dans le fossé est pour le soldat* = Findings keepings. (See *Prendre.*)

Fou. *Cela lui a coûté un argent fou* (fam.) = That cost him a heap (*or*, mint) of money.
**Combattre un fou est temps perdu* = Fools are not to be convinced.
[Schiller says: 'Against stupidity the very gods themselves contend in vain' ('Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens.'—*Jungfrau von Orleans*, iii. 6), and the Chinese say: 'One never needs one's wit so much as when one argues with a fool.']
Ne faites pas messagers des fous = 'He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet and drinketh damage.'—Prov. xxvi. 6.
Un fol ou bête
Fait bien conquête,
Mais bon menage
C'est fait du sage =
A fool may meet with good fortune, but only the wise profit by it.
**Plus on est de fous plus on rit* = The more the merrier.

Fou. (*cont.*)

Fou qui va à Rome, fou en revient = Travel makes a wise man better, but a fool worse.

**Qui ne sait pas être fou n'est pas sage* = He is not wise who does not sometimes make merry ; It takes a wise man to make a fool.

[Compare La Rochefoucauld's maxim : 'Qui vit sans folie n'est pas si sage qu'il le croit.'
Also : *Il n'y a point de grands esprits sans un grain de folie.*]

**Les fous sont aux échecs les plus proches des rois* = In chess the fool stands next to the king.

[Régnier, *Sat.* xiv, copied from an old satire of Maître Guillaume. This implies that it is not only at chess that the king is surrounded by fools, but at court too. It must not be forgotten that *le fou* is called *the bishop* in the English game.]

Il est fou à lier (or, *fou furieux*) = He is raving mad.

Il est fou à courir les rues = He is stark, staring mad.

Il vaut mieux être fou avec tous que sage tout seul = 'One had as good be out of the world as out of the fashion.'

[Colley Cibber, *Love's Last Shift*, Act ii.]

L'imagination est la folle du logis = Imagination is the unreasoning part of our mind.

[This saying is attributed to Malebranche by Voltaire in his *Dictionnaire philosophique* s. v. 'apparition' ; it has also been said to occur in Montaigne, Montesquieu, and St. Theresa, but King (op. cit.) says it is found in none of them.]

Fol semble sage quand il se tait = A fool may appear wise until he opens his mouth.

Fouet.

Il ne marche qu'à coups de fouet = He works only when he is compelled.

Faire claquer son fouet = To blow one's own trumpet.

Fouetter. *Fouette, cocher!* = Fire away ! Go ahead !

Four.

Il fait noir comme dans un four = It is as dark as pitch.

[Molière, *Le Sicilien*, ii.]

Faire un four = To make a blunder.

Cette pièce a fait four = That piece was a failure, a frost.

Four. (*cont.*) *On ne peut être au four et au moulin* = One cannot be in two places at the same time.

[Or: *On ne peut être à la fois dans la tranchée et à l'usine* (*dans la procession et à la fenêtre*).]

Ce n'est pas pour vous que le four chauffe = We are not doing all this for you.

Fourchette. *Une bonne fourchette* = A good trencherman.

['A very valiant trencherman.'—*Much Ado about Nothing*, I. i.]

Fourgon. **C'est la pelle qui se moque du fourgon* = 'Tis the pot calling the kettle black.

Fourreau. **L'épée* (or, *la lame*) *use le fourreau* = The mind is too active for the body.

['A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay.'
DRYDEN, *Absalom and Achitophel*, I.]

Fourrer. *Il ne savait où se fourrer* = He did not know where to hide his head.

Il faut qu'il fourre le doigt (or, more fam., *nez*) *partout* = He must have a finger in every one's pie.

Frais. *En être pour ses frais* = To have lost one's money (*or*, pains) for nothing.

Faire des frais = (lit.) To go to expense; (fig.) To make efforts to please.

Faire ses frais = To cover one's expenses.

Faire les frais de la conversation = 1. To keep a conversation going. 2. To be (oneself) the subject of conversation.

Français. *En bon français* = (lit.) In good French; (fig.) In plain English (i.e. without mincing matters).

Parler français comme une vache espagnole = To speak French very badly.

[This is said to be a corruption of *comme un Basque espagnol* (formerly written *Vace*). The Basques speak French with a very bad accent, owing to their language having no relation whatever to the Romance tongues.]

Franquette. *Recevoir quelqu'un à la bonne franquette* = To treat a person without ceremony.

Frein. *Ronger son frein* = To put up with annoyance in silence.

À vieille mule frein doré = Old women have the finest clothes.

Friandise. *Aimer les friandises* (*chatteries*) = To have a sweet tooth.

Friser. *Elle frise la quarantaine* = She is just upon forty.

Froid. *Cela se mange froid* = (lit.) That is eaten cold ; (fig.) That is a matter of no importance; That is easily done.

Il n'a pas froid aux yeux = He is a plucky fellow.

Il fait un froid de loup = It is terribly cold.

Front. *Vous heurtez de front tous ses préjugés* = You run counter to (*or*, openly attack) all his prejudices.

Il mène plusieurs affaires de front = He carries on several schemes simultaneously; He has many irons in the fire.

Marcher de front = To walk abreast.

Frotter. **Qui s'y frotte s'y pique* = Whoever meddles with it will smart for it.

[Compare the motto of the Order of the Thistle: 'Nemo me impune lacessit.']

Je ne vous conseille pas de vous y frotter = I advise you not to meddle with it.

On l'a frotté d'importance (or, *comme il faut*) = He got a good drubbing.

Fuite. *Une bonne fuite vaut mieux qu'une mauvaise attente* = Discretion is the better part of valour.

[Also : *Qui fuit ce soir combattra demain.*
and : '*Qui fuit peut revenir aussi.*
Qui meurt, ce n'est pas ainsi.'—SCARRON.
Compare : *Hudibras*, III. iii. 243.
'For he who fights and runs away
May live to fight another day.'
GOLDSMITH, *The art of poetry on a new plan* (1761).
The idea is derived from the sixth fragment of Archilochus which is quoted by Plutarch.]

Fumée. *Manger son pain à la fumée du rôt* = To see others enjoying themselves without joining in.

Fumée. (*cont.*) *Il n'y a pas de feu sans fumée* = There is no smoke without fire.

[Though the French form is not exact, it is preferred to '*il n'y a pas de fumée sans feu*' for rhythmical reasons. Compare PLAUTUS, *Curculio*, i. 1. 53, 'Flamma fumo est proxima.']

Fur. *Au fur et à mesure* = In proportion as.

Fureur. *Cela fait fureur maintenant* = That is quite the rage now; That is all the go now.

Fusil. *Changer son fusil d'épaule* = To change one's opinion, profession, tactics.

[A more familiar expression is *tourner casaque*, or, *retourner sa veste* = to be a turn-coat.]

G.

Gaffe. *Faire une gaffe* = To put one's foot in it; To make a stupid blunder.

Gageure. **La gageure est la preuve des sots* =

'Most men (till by losing rendered sager)
Will back their own opinions with a wager.'

[BYRON, *Beppo*, 27.

Quoth she: 'I've heard old cunning stagers
Say fools for arguments use wagers.'

Hudibras, II. i. 297.]

Gagner. **Qui épargne gagne* = A penny saved is a penny earned.

Il gagne à être connu = He improves upon acquaintance.

Gai. *Il est gai comme un pinson* = He is as merry as a grig, as a lark; jolly as a sandboy.

Il est gai comme un bonnet de nuit (ironic) = He is as dull as ditch-water. (See *Bonnet*.)

Gaieté. *De gaieté de cœur* = Out of pure wantonness.

Gaillard. *Être sur le gaillard d'avant* = To serve before the mast; To be a common seaman.

Galère. *Vogue la galère!* = Happen what may! 'Go it, ye cripples!' Let it rip. What's the odds?

[In Rabelais, i. 3, this is written *Vogue la galée*, and King (op. cit. p. 377) suggests that the phrase is derived from an old rondeau.]

***'Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?'* = Whatever induced him to get into that fix? Whatever business had he there?

[Molière, *Fourberies de Scapin*, ii. 11, imitated from a scene of *Le Pédant joué*, by Cyrano de Bergerac, as is noted by M. Edmond Rostand in his play, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, v. 6:

Rag. Hier on jouait *Scapin*
Et j'ai vu qu'il vous a pris une scène
Le Bret. Entière!
Rag. Oui, Monsieur, le fameux: 'Que diable allait-il faire?'

In Molière, Scapin, the amusing but rascally servant of farce, in order to obtain more money out of Géronte, the father of his young master, Léandre, pretends that the latter has been taken prisoner on board a Turkish galley, and that the captain demands 500 crowns as ransom. Géronte, in the dilemma of losing either his money or his son, at last parts with his treasured gold, but not without repeating several times in heartfelt sorrow, *'Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?'* See *Bien.*]

Galerie. *Ce n'est pas pour la galerie* (*pour la montre*) = He does not do that to show off.

Galeux. **Il ne faut qu'une brebis galeuse pour infecter tout un troupeau* = One scabby sheep will taint a whole flock.

**Qui se sent galeux, se gratte* (*fam.*) = If the cap fits, wear it. (See *Morveux.*)

Galon. *Quand on prend du galon on n'en saurait trop prendre* = As well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb; One cannot make too much of a favourable opportunity; One cannot have too much of a good thing.

[This is a parody of a line in Quinault's *Roland*, ii. 5: 'Quand on prend de l'amour, on n'en saurait trop prendre.']

Gant. *Il s'en donne les gants* = He takes the credit of it.

[It was the custom to give a pair of gloves to the messenger who first brought a piece of good news.]

Cela me va comme un gant = That fits me to a T; That suits me down to the ground.

Garçon. *Vous voilà joli garçon!* = A pretty fellow you are!

Garde. *Mon chien est de bonne garde* = Mine is a good watch-dog.

Garde. (*cont.*) *Ces poires sont de bonne garde* = These pears will keep well.

Il n'a garde de venir = He will take care to keep away; There is no chance of his coming.

Il s'en donne jusqu'à la garde = He takes his fill of pleasure.

Garder. *Il vous en garde une bonne* (pop.) = He is keeping a rod in pickle for you.

Gardez-vous-en bien! = Mind you do not do it! Do nothing of the kind.

Gaspiller. *Ce garçon gaspille son temps* = That boy fools his time away.

Gauche. *Avoir passé l'arme à gauche* = To be dead and buried.

[The complete phrase is *avoir passé, (les soldats ayant) l'arme à gauche.* At funerals soldiers carry their rifles reversed on the left shoulder.]

Geler. *Geler à pierre fendre* = To freeze very hard.

Gémir. *Faire gémir la presse* (ironic) = To print one's writings.

Gêne. *Il est sans gêne* = He is free and easy (casual, off-hand); He makes himself too much at home.

**Où il y a de la gêne il n'y a pas de plaisir* (ironic) = There is nothing like making one's self at home everywhere.

Il a connu la gêne = He knows what want is.

Gêner. *Est-ce que je vous gêne?* = Am I in your way?

Ne vous gênez pas! = Do not stand upon ceremony! Make yourself at home! Don't mind me!

Il ne se gêne guère = Doesn't he make himself at home! Well, he is a cool customer!

Il est plus gênant que gêné = His free and easy manners are unpleasant to others, but he does not mind that.

Génie. *Le génie n'est autre chose qu'une grande aptitude à la patience* = Genius means transcendent capacity for taking trouble.

[The French is attributed to Buffon, although it is not to be

Génie. (*cont.*) found in his writings. Madame Necker, wife of Louis XVI's Minister and a great friend of Buffon, reports his words in her *Pensées et Souvenirs* (1801, vol. i, p. 154): 'Le génie se forme par la patience en considérant longtemps une idée et en trouvant enfin des rapports féconds et bien liés.' The English is a quotation from CARLYLE, *Frederick the Great*, bk. iv, chap. 3.]

Gens. **À gens de village, trompette de bois* = Rough tools for rough work.

Gésir. **C'est là que gît le lièvre* = That is the main point; There's the rub.

Gibier. *C'est un gibier de potence* = He is a gallows-bird.

Gloire.

'J'aime mieux, n'en déplaise à la gloire,
Vivre au monde deux jours que mille ans dans l'histoire.'
MOLIÈRE, *La Princesse d'Élide*, i. 2.

Contrast:

'One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.'
WALTER SCOTT, *Old Mortality*, Chap. 34.

Gond. *Cela me fait sortir des gonds* = That exasperates (*lit.* unhinges) me.

Gorge. *Cette fumée me prend à la gorge* = That smoke makes me cough, chokes me.

Il cria à pleine gorge = He cried out as loud as he could.

Il fera des gorges chaudes du malheur de sa tante = He will chuckle over (*or*, make fun of) his aunt's misfortune.

['Prétend qu'elle en fera gorge chaude et curée.'
LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, iv. 12.]

Rendre gorge = To have to pay back money unjustly acquired; To disgorge one's ill-gotten gains.

Gourmandise. *La gourmandise tue plus de gens que l'épée* = A man may dig his grave with his teeth.

Gourme. *Ce jeune homme jette sa gourme* = That young man is sowing his wild oats.

Goût. **Des goûts et des couleurs il ne faut* (*pas*) *discuter* (or, *disputer*) = There is no disputing about tastes.

**À chacun son goût* = Tastes differ.

[Colloquially the *à* is omitted and the phrase becomes *chacun son goût*. The Dictionnaire de l'Académie gives: *Chacun* a *son goût*.]

Goutte. *Je n'y vois goutte* = I cannot see at all.
Je n'y comprends goutte = I cannot make head or tail of it.
**Goutte à goutte on emplit la cuve* = Many a little makes a mickle.
**Ils se ressemblent comme deux gouttes d'eau* = They are as like as two peas.
C'est une goutte d'eau dans la mer = It is a drop in the ocean.
Boire la goutte (fam.) = To have a drop; To take a nip.
Payer la goutte (fam.) = To stand something to drink.

Grâce. *Faites-moi grâce de vos observations, je vous en prie* = Pray spare me your remarks.

Grain. *Veillez au grain* = Keep a sharp look-out.
Avoir un grain de folie = To be a little cracked.

Graine. *Ces plantes sont montées en graine* = Those plants have run to seed.
C'est de la graine de niais = That is something to deceive fools with; A fool would not be taken in by it.

Grand. **Les grands sont les plus exposés aux coups du sort* = High winds blow on high hills.
[Also: *On ne jette des pierres qu'à l'arbre chargé de fruits.*
'Saepius ventis agitatur ingens
Pinus.' HORACE, *Odes*, II. x. 9.]
Faire quelque chose en grand = To do something on a large scale.

Grandeur. *Un buste de grandeur naturelle* = A life-size bust.

Grave.
'Heureux qui, dans ses vers, sait d'une voix légère
Passer du grave au doux, du plaisant au sévère.'
BOILEAU, *Art poétique*, i. 75.
Compare:
'From grave to light, from pleasant to severe.'
DRYDEN, *Art of Poesy*, i. 75.
And:
'From grave to gay, from lively to severe.'
POPE, *Essay on Man*, iv. 379.]

Gré. **Bon gré, mal gré* = Whether you wish or not, *Nolens volens;* Willy-nilly.

Cette maison a été vendue de gré à gré (or, *à l'amiable*) = That house was sold by private contract.

Il le fera de gre ou de force = He will have to do it whether he likes it or not.

Il venait moitié de gré, moitié de force = He came somewhat reluctantly.

De son plein gré = Of his own accord.

De plein gré = Voluntarily.

Nous vous en saurons bon gré = We shall be obliged to you for it.

Je me sais bon gré de ne l'avoir pas fait = I am thankful I did not do it.

Grelot. **Attacher le grelot* = To bell the cat.

[This phrase arises from the fable (La Fontaine, ii. 2) of the rats who held a council as to how they might best defend themselves from the cat. They resolved to hang a bell round his neck, so that they might hear him coming and run away. But the difficulty was to find a volunteer 'to bell the cat'. In Scottish history Archibald Douglas, 5th Earl of Angus (1449–1514), was called Bell-the-Cat. James III used to make favourites of architects and masons. The Scottish nobles held a council in the Church of Lauder for the purpose of putting down these upstarts. Lord Gray asked who would bell the cat. 'That will I', said Douglas, and fearlessly he put the minions to death in the king's presence. Compare Scott, *Marmion*, v. 14. The Greek equivalent, Ξυρεῖν λέοντα (= to shave the lion), occurs in Plato, *Republic*, 341 c. The refrain of Eustace Deschamps' Ballade 58 is: 'Qui pendra la sonnette au chat?']

Grenier. *Il va de la cave au grenier* = 1. He rambles in his talk. 2. He writes very unevenly (up and down).

Grippe. *Il m'a pris en grippe* = He has taken a dislike to me.

Gris. *Il en a vu de grises* = He had an unpleasant time of it.

Il lui en a fait voir de grises = He plagued him terribly.

Grive. **Faute de grives on mange des merles* = If you cannot get crumb, you had best eat crust; Half a loaf is better than no bread. (See *Aimer.*)

Gros. *Ils se sont dit de gros mots* = They came to high words; They insulted (slanged) one another.

La servante fait le gros de la besogne (or, *la grosse besogne*) = The servant does the heavy work.

Il n'a qu'un gros bon sens = He has only plain common sense.

Vous avez touché la grosse corde = You have come to the main point.

Vendre en gros et en détail = To sell wholesale and retail.

Grue. *Il m'a fait faire le pied de grue pendant deux heures* = He made me wait two hours for him; I was dancing attendance on him for two hours.

['Faites vous sus un pied toute la nuict la grue?'
RÉGNIER, *Sat.* xi. (See *Croquer.*)]

Guerre. **À la guerre comme à la guerre* = One must take things as they come; We must take the rough with the smooth.

Je l'ai fait de guerre lasse = Weary of resistance I did it for the sake of peace and quiet.

**Qui terre a, guerre a* = Much coin, much care; Much land, many lawsuits.

[Voltaire's variant was: 'Qui plume a, guerre a.']

Ça, c'est de bonne guerre = He has only used fair means to defend himself (*or*, attack you); He has acted within his rights, you cannot complain.

Guide. *Mener la vie à grandes guides* = (lit.) To drive through life four-in-hand; (fig.) To live a very fast life.

Guillot. **Qui croit guiller Guillot, Guillot le guille* =

'He that seeks others to beguile
Is oft overtaken in his wile.'

The biter bit; Jockeying the jockey; Harm set, harm get.

['For often he that will begyle
Is gyled with the same gyle,
And thus the gyler is begyled.'
GOWER, *Confessio Amantis*, 135.

Guillot. (*cont.*)

'For 'tis the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petar.' *Hamlet*, iii. 4.

'C'est double plaisir de tromper le trompeur.'
La Fontaine, *Fables*, ii. 15.
(See *Laine* and *Mal.*)]

Guise. *Il fait* (or, *agit*) *toujours à sa guise* = He always goes his own way; He always acts according to his own sweet will.

H.

Habit. **L'habit ne fait pas le moine* = The cowl does not make the friar; The coat does not make the gentleman.

[This proverb is as old as the Egyptians, who said: 'The linen coat does not make the priest of Isis.'

Latin: 'Philosophum non facit barba.'

German: 'To carry a large knife does not make a cook.'

Also in French: *On ne connaît pas le vin au cercle ni l'homme à l'habit.*
(See *Sac.*)]

Prendre l'habit = To become a monk or a nun (of the latter, To take the veil).

Habitué. *Ce monsieur est un de nos habitués* = That gentleman is one of our regular customers.

Hache. *Cela est fait à coups de hache* (or, *serpe*) = That is done clumsily, roughly.

Hacher. *Je les hacherais menu comme chair à pâté* = I would make mincemeat of them.

Haleine. *J'ai couru à perte d'haleine* = I ran until I was out of breath.

Ce sont des phrases à perte d'haleine = Those are very long-winded sentences.

Il faut tenir les gens en haleine = One must keep the ball rolling.

C'est un ouvrage de longue haleine = It's a long job, a heavy piece of work.

Halle. *Le langage des Halles* = Billingsgate.
[Also: '*des injures de carrefour.*']

Hallebarde. *Cela rime comme hallebarde et miséricorde* = That does not rhyme at all; That is as like as chalk and cheese.

[The usual explanation of this expression is that, on the death of the verger of St. Eustache, one of his friends—a small shopkeeper of the neighbourhood—wished to write an epitaph for his tomb. Being entirely ignorant of the rules of verse, he composed the following:

'Ci-gît mon ami Mardoche,
Il a voulu être enterré à Saint-Eustache,
Il y porta trente-deux ans la hallebarde,
Dieu lui fasse miséricorde.'
(Par son ami, J. Cl. Bombet, 1727.)

But in reality the proverb is much older. It dates from the time of the old versifiers, one of whose rules was that two consonants followed by an *e* mute were sufficient to form a feminine rhyme. This led to abuses like the above, and this rule was superseded by another, that the vowel preceding the two consonants must be alike in both cases. Poor Mardoche might have echoed the well-known epitaph which Jean Passerat wrote for himself, of which the last line runs:

'Amis, de mauvais vers ne chargez pas ma tombe.']

Hanter. *Dis-moi qui tu hantes, je te dirai qui tu es* = A man is known by his company; Birds of a feather flock together. (See *Assembler.*)

[Also: *Qui se couche avec les chiens, il se lève avec les puces.* Brillat Savarin parodied the saying thus: Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es.' With which may be compared: 'Those who drink beer think beer.']

Hardi. *Hardi comme un page* = As bold as brass.

Haro. *Crier haro* (or, *tollé*) *sur quelqu'un* = To raise an outcry against any one; To voice a feeling of general indignation.

['A ces mots on cria haro sur le baudet.'
La Fontaine, *Fables*, vii. 1.

The origin of the word *haro* is disputed; Littré quotes Diez, who connects it with O. H. G. *hera* = here. The old opinion was that it was derived from *Ha-Raoul*, an appeal to Rollo, or Hrolf, first Duke of Normandy, and a mighty lawgiver. However, even as late as May, 1924, the cry of *Ha-Ro! à l'aide, mon Prince!* was used in the Channel Islands as a protection against force and fraud, when no other defence was possible. See a curious tale in *The Gossiping Guide to Jersey*, by J. Bertrand Payne, London, 1863, p. 15.]

Hasard. *Il corrige le hasard* = He cheats at play.

['La fortune est redevenue mauvaise, il faut la corriger.'
HAMILTON, *Mémoires de Grammont*, iii.]

Par un coup de hasard = By a fluke.

Hâte. **Trop de hâte gâte tout* = The more haste, the less speed.

[Also: *Plus on se hâte, moins on avance; Hâtez-vous lentement* (Lat. *Festina lente*); *Assez tôt si bien;* and the popular English proverb, 'Do nothing hastily save catching of fleas'.

'Hâtez-vous lentement; et sans perdre courage
Vingt fois sur le métier remettez votre ouvrage.
BOILEAU, *Art poétique*, i. 171.

(See *Chemin, Bruit,* and *Presse.*)]

Hâter. **Ouvrage hâté, ouvrage gâté* = Haste makes waste.

Haut. *Tomber de son haut* = (fig.) To be thunderstruck.

Regarder de haut en bas = To treat contemptuously; To look down upon with contempt.

Il y a du haut et du bas dans la vie = Life has its ups and downs.

Haut le pied! = Be off!

Herbe. **Mauvaise herbe croît toujours* = Ill weeds grow apace.

[Also: ***Mauvaise graine est tôt venue.***
German: 'Unkraut vergeht nicht.']

Votre rival vous coupera l'herbe sous le pied = Your rival will cut you out, will take the wind out of your sails, will cut the ground from under your feet.

L'herbe sera bien courte s'il ne trouve à brouter = It will go hard if he does not pick up a living; He would live on nothing.

C'est un avocat en herbe = He is studying for the bar; He is a budding barrister.

J'ai dû marcher sur quelque mauvaise herbe = Something has happened which has put me in a bad temper, has put my back up, has rubbed me up the wrong way.

[LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, vii. i.]

Herbe. (*cont.*) *Employer toutes les herbes de la Saint-Jean* = To use every possible means to succeed.

[It was thought in former ages that herbs picked on St. John's Day (June 24) had marvellous properties of cure.]

Heure. *À l'heure qu'il est on ne le fait plus* = Nowadays it is no longer done.

À l'heure qu'il est il doit savoir la nouvelle = By this time no doubt he has heard the news.

Faites-le sur l'heure = Do it this very minute.

Je partirai tout à l'heure = I will start presently.

Je l'ai vu tout à l'heure = I saw him just now, not long ago.

À la bonne heure! = Well done! That's right! Capital! That is something like!

Le quart d'heure de Rabelais = The moment of payment (*or*, suspense).

[On returning from Italy, Rabelais found himself at Lyon with no more money to continue his journey to Paris. He had dined well at an inn, and while waiting for his reckoning he packed up some dust in small packets, which he labelled 'Poison for the King', 'Poison for the Dauphin', and so on. The innkeeper, noticing these packets and their terrible inscriptions, informed the police, who took Rabelais to Paris free of charge to suffer the penalty of treason. When he was brought before the King the monarch laughed heartily at the tale and let him go free.

'So comes a reck'ning when the banquet's o'er,
The dreadful reck'ning; and men smile no more.'

GAY, *The what d'ye call it*, ii. 9.]

Passer un mauvais quart d'heure = To have a bad time of it.

Histoire. *Voilà bien des histoires pour si peu de chose!* = What a fuss about nothing!

Voilà bien une autre histoire! = That is quite another thing.

Histoire (or, *Chansons*) *que tout cela!* = That is all stuff and nonsense.

Le plus beau de l'histoire c'était qu'il n'en savait rien = The best of the joke was that he knew nothing about it.

Histoire de rire = 1. For the fun of the thing. 2. It was only a joke.

Hommage. *Hommage de l'auteur* = With the author's compliments.

Homme. **L'homme propose et Dieu dispose* = Man proposes, God disposes.

[Also: *L'homme s'agite, mais Dieu le mène.*

FÉNELON, *Sermon pour la Fête de l'Épiphanie, Jan.* 6, 1685.

'A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.'—Proverbs xvi. 9.

'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will.'—*Hamlet*, v. 2.

German: 'Der Mensch denkt, Gott lenkt.'

'Homo proponit, sed Deus disponit.'—*Imitatio Christi*, i. 19.]

**Le style c'est l'homme* = Style is the man himself; Like author, like book.

['Ces choses sont hors de l'homme, le style est l'homme même.'—BUFFON, *Discours de Réception à l'Académie*, 1753. There has been much discussion as to what Buffon really did write, whether *le style est l'homme même* or *le style est* DE *l'homme même*. In most editions after that of Didot (1843) the latter form will be found, whilst in editions from 1800–1843 the phrase is absent altogether. In the *Recueil de l'Académie* it is printed *le style est l'homme même*, and of this the proofs were probably corrected by Buffon himself. There is a small pamphlet, *Discours prononce dans l'Académie française par M. de Buffon le samedi* 25 *août* 1753, which is probably earlier still, in which it is also printed thus. However this may be, the phrase *le style c'est l'homme*, which Buffon assuredly did *not* write, has become a French proverb, and is in everyday use.

Newman said: 'Style is the shadow of a personality.']

Tant vaut l'homme, tant vaut sa terre = What a man is worth, his land is worth.

Honneur. *Nous jouons pour l'honneur* = We are playing for love (i. e. not for money).

**Un homme d'honneur n'a que sa parole* = An honest man's word is as good as his bond.

Il fait honneur à ses affaires (comm.) = He meets all his engagements.

Il ne prétend à votre fille qu'en tout bien tout honneur = He has honourable intentions towards your daughter.

Honte. *Nous lui avons fait honte* = 1. We caused him to feel ashamed of himself. 2. He was ashamed of us.

Honteux. **Jamais honteux n'eut belle amie* = Faint heart never won fair lady.

[German: 'Zage haben kein Glück.']

**Il n'y a que les honteux qui perdent* = Nothing ask, nothing have.

Hors. *Hors ligne* = Standing out from the rest; Out of the common run; Beyond comparison; Incomparable.

Ce peintre est hors concours = That artist is no longer a competitor (having already received the highest award).

Hôte. **Qui compte sans son hôte compte deux fois* = He who reckons without his host must reckon again.

Huile. *Sentir l'huile* = To smell of the lamp (of poetry, &c.); To lack natural expression.

[At one time oil lamps were the usual illuminant, and work that was over-elaborated at night was said to smell of oil or of the lamp.]

Il tirerait de l'huile d'un mur = He would skin a flint, get blood from a stone. (See *Cheveux* and *Œuf.*)

['Aquam a pumice postulare.'—PLAUTUS.]

De l'huile de bras (or, *de coude*) = Elbow grease.

Huis. *À huis clos* = With closed doors; in camera.

I.

Image. *Cette petite fille est sage comme une image* = That little girl is very quiet, is as good as gold.

Imiter. *'C'est imiter quelqu'un que de planter des choux'* = Originality is very rare.

[The French is from *Namouna* (ii. 9) by Alfred de Musset. Piron had said of the unconscious plagiarism of former writers: 'Leurs écrits sont des vols qu'ils nous ont faits d'avance.' (*Métromanie*, iii. 6.)
Donatus had said: 'Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt.'
Compare the title of E. Fournier's book: *L'Esprit des Autres* = Wit at second hand.]

Importance. *Faire l'homme d'importance* = To play the consequential; To give oneself airs; To be pompous.

On l'a rossé d'importance = They gave him a fine thrashing.

Importer. *Qu'importe?* = No matter! It is of no consequence.

Que m'importe? = What is that to me?

Peu importe = It does not much matter.

Venez n'importe quand = Come at any time, no matter when, whenever you please.

Impossible. **À l'impossible nul n'est tenu* = There is no doing impossibilities; No living man all things can; The best can do no more.

[Also: *On ne peut pas peigner un diable qui n'a pas de cheveux.*]

Index. *Les grévistes mirent cette boutique à l'index* = The strikers boycotted that shop.

[The *Index Expurgatorius*, compiled by order of the Pope, is a list of books which Roman Catholics are forbidden to read.]

Injure. *Ils se sont dit mille injures* = They abused one another like pickpockets.

Vous lui faites injure = You wrong him.

'L'injure se grave en métal et le bienfait s'escrit en l'onde' = 'Men's evil manners live in brass: their virtues we write in water.'

[Jean Bertaut (1611) and *Henry VIII*, iv. 2.]

Innocent. *Un innocent fourré de malice* = A wolf in sheep's clothing.

Inscrire. *Je m'inscris en faux contre cette assertion* = I emphatically deny the truth of that assertion.

Insu. *Il sortit à mon insu* = He went out without my knowing it.

Intelligence. *Vivre en bonne intelligence avec quelqu'un* = To live on good terms with some one.

Intention. **L'intention est réputée pour le fait* = The will is taken for the deed.

Intention. *J'ai mis ce livre de côté à votre intention* = I put (*cont.*) that book on one side especially for you (to read, to see).

Ivrogne. *À la trogne on connaît l'ivrogne* = A drunkard is known by his grog-blossomed face.

J.

Jamais. *Au grand jamais* = Never, no never.

Jambe. *Il court à toutes jambes* = He is running as fast as his legs will carry him.

[Compare: *à toute bride, à toute vapeur, à toute vitesse, à toute allure, à tout casser, à fond de train, ventre à terre.*]

Il a pris ses jambes à son cou = He took to his heels.

Il a joué des jambes = He took to flight.

Il a des jambes de quinze ans = He still walks well.

Cela ne lui rend pas la jambe mieux faite! (ironic.) = And a lot of good that will do him! He is no better off for that.

Cela vous ferait une belle jambe (ironic.) = A fine lot of good that will do you.

['Cela vous rendrait la jambe bien mieux faite.'—MOLIÈRE, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, iii. 3.]

Il a les jambes en manche de veste (fam.) = He is bow-legged.

Il le fera par-dessous la jambe = He will do it with the greatest ease (*or*, carelessly).

Il a des fourmis dans les jambes = He is fidgety, restless.

Si l'on n'a pas de tête, il faut avoir des jambes = A forgetful head makes a weary pair of heels.

[Also: *Les jambes portent la faute de la tête.*]

Les jambes lui entrent dans le corps = He is thoroughly worn out.

Jaune. *Jaune comme un coing* = As yellow as a guinea.

Jean. *Être gros Jean comme devant* = To be no better off than one was before, in spite of all one's efforts.

[Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, iv, second prologue, and La Fontaine, *Fables*, vii. 10.]

Jeter. *Il jette son argent par les fenêtres* = He plays ducks and drakes with his money.

C'est jeter de l'huile sur le feu = It is adding fuel to the fire (flames).

Jeu. **Jeu qui trop dure ne vaut rien* (Charles d'Orléans) = Too much of a good thing is bad.

['Ne quid nimis.'—Terence, *Andria*, i. 1.

'*Rien de trop* est un point dont on parle sans cesse.'—La Fontaine, *Fables*, ix. 11.

'Je n'ai fait celle-ci plus longue que parce que je n'ai pas eu le loisir de la faire plus courte.'—Pascal, *Provinciales*, xvi *ad fin.*]

C'est vieux jeu = That is quite old-fashioned.

Ne me mettez pas en jeu = Do not mix me up in it.

Ce n'est pas votre tête qui sera en jeu = Your head will not be at stake.

Cela passe le jeu = That is beyond a joke.

**Jeu de mains, jeu de vilains* = 1. Horse-play is not gentlemanly. 2. Rough play often ends in tears.

Il fait bonne mine à mauvais jeu = He puts a good face on the matter; He makes the best of a bad job.

**À beau jeu beau retour* = One good turn deserves another.

[German: 'Eine Hand wäscht die andere.'

'Manus manum lavat.'—Seneca, *Apoc.* ix. 9.]

Nous sommes à deux de jeu = We are even; We are a match for each other; Two can play at that game.

Je vous donne beau jeu = (lit.) I give you good cards; (fig.) I give you a good opportunity; I play into your hands.

Jouer gros jeu = (lit.) To play for high stakes; (fig.) To risk very much in an attempt.

Cela n'est pas du jeu = 1. That is not fair, not cricket; You are not playing the game. 2. That was not agreed upon.

Jeune. **Qui jeune n'apprend, rien ne saura* = An old dog will learn no new tricks. (See *Jeunesse.*)

Jeunesse. **Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait* = If only the young had experience and the old strength; If things were to be done twice, all would be wise.

[In his *Second Scrap Book*, p. 348, Dr. George Saintsbury compares this proverb with Mr. Asquith's saying: 'Youth would be an ideal state if it came a little later in life.']

Ce que poulain prend en jeunesse, il le continue en vieillesse =

'Tis education forms the common mind.
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.'

[Pope, *Moral Essays*, i. 149.
Also: *Ce qu'on apprend au berceau dure jusqu'au tombeau.*
German: 'Jung gewohnt, alt gethan.'
Youth and white paper take any impression.
Also: *Vieil arbre mal aisé à redresser.* Compare the English 'Old dogs are hard to train.' (See *Jeune.*)
'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'—Proverbs xxii. 6.]

Il faut que jeunesse se passe = Boys will be boys.

La jeunesse dorée = The gilded youth.

[A name given in 1794 to the young men of wealth attached to the Revolutionary party.]

Job. *Il est comme Job sur son fumier* = He is as poor as Job.

Joie. *Un rabat-joie* = A mar-joy; A wet blanket.

La joie donne des ailes =

'A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.'

[*The Winter's Tale*, iv. 3, *ad fin.*]

Jouer. *Il joua de son reste* = He played his last card; He was on his last legs.

[Carefully distinguish this from *Jouir de son reste* = To make the most of one's remaining time.]

Il joue au plus sûr = He plays a safe game.

Jouer de malheur = To have a run of ill-luck.

Jouer serré = To act cautiously; To leave nothing to chance.

Jouer. (*cont.*) *Une étoffe qui joue la soie* = A stuff that looks like silk.

Il joue la comédie (fig.) = He is only pretending.

Jour. *Ces gens vivent au jour le jour* = Those men live from day to day, from hand to mouth.

**À chaque jour suffit sa peine* = Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

['Sufficit diei malitia sua.'—Matt. vi. 34.]

Je suis à jour = I am up to date; I am not behind in my work.

**Tôt ou tard la vérité se fait jour* = Sooner or later the truth will come out.

['Love and murder will out.'
CONGREVE, *The Double Dealer*, iv. 2.

'Vero è pur che l'uom non possa
Celar per certo l'amore e la tossa.'
PULCI, *Morganti Maggiore*, iv. 38.

(See *Vérité.*)]

C'est le jour et la nuit = They are as different as chalk and cheese.

Il n'est si long jour qui ne vienne à vêpres =

'Be the day weary, be the day long,
At length it ringeth to evensong.'

[From a poem by Stephen Hawes, a poet of the reign of Henry VII.
Compare:

'Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.'
Macbeth, i. 3.

The longest day must have an end.
And:

Come day, go day,
God brings Sunday.

Also: *Car il n'est si beau jour qui n'amène sa nuit*, the last line of the epitaph of d'Orbesan (d. 1595) in Sant' Antonio at Padua, noted by Chateaubriand as 'un vers qu'un grand poète voudrait avoir fait' (*Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*).]

**À bon jour bonne œuvre* = The better the day, the better the deed.

**Ce n'est pas tous les jours fête* = 1. Christmas comes but once a year. 2. One cannot always have 'a high old time', but must work as well. 3. Life is not all beer and skittles.

Jour. (*cont.*) *D'aujourd'hui en huit* = This day week.

Il y a aujourd'hui huit jours = This day last week.

En plein jour = In broad daylight.

Il y a quinze ans jour pour jour = It was fifteen years ago to the very day.

Prendre jour = To agree upon a day for an appointment.

Mon commis m'a quitté du jour au lendemain = My clerk left me at a minute's notice.

Il y a beau jour = It is long ago.

Journée. *Marcher à petites journées* = To travel by short stages.

[*À grandes journées* = by forced marches.]

Juge. **De fou juge briève* (*brève*) *sentence* = A fool's bolt is soon shot.

Juger. *Juger sur l'étiquette du sac* = To judge by appearances, by the exterior.

Au juger = At a guess.

Jurer. *Le vert jure avec le jaune* = Green does not match with yellow; Green clashes with yellow.

Jurer comme un templier (*charretier, païen*) = To swear like a trooper.

Il ne faut jurer de rien = Anything may happen; You never can tell. (See *Fontaine.*)

Juste. *Au plus juste prix* = At the lowest price.

Comme de juste = Rightly enough.

[Littré condemns this expression as ungrammatical, giving the correct form as: *comme il est juste.* It is, however, almost universally used.]

Justice. *Passer à pleines voiles à travers les mailles de la justice* = To drive a coach-and-four through an Act of Parliament.

[Also: *Il est facile de donner une entorse à la loi.*]

La justice ne connaît personne = Justice is no respecter of persons.

L.

Là *'Je jette là mon soufflet avec dépit'* = I fling aside my bellows in disgust.

[E. Souvestre, *Le Philosophe sous les toits.*]

Laine. *Nous sommes allés chercher de la laine et nous sommes revenus tondus* = We went out to shear and returned shorn; The biter bit.

Laisser. *Cela laisse à désirer* = There is room for improvement; It is not quite the thing.

Je ne laisse pas d'être inquiet = In spite of all that, I am anxious.

[Here we have the old meaning of *laisser* (= *laxare*), to leave off. Hence, I do not leave off being anxious.]

C'est à prendre ou à laisser = You must take it or leave it; It's a case of Hobson's choice.

Il se laissa faire = He offered no resistance.

Laissez faire, laissez passer = Let us have Free Trade.

[This was the motto of the French economists of the middle of the eighteenth century, Quesnay, Turgot, &c. But the term *laisser faire* originated with Colbert a century before. (See *The Times*, Aug. 30, 1919.)]

Il se laisse rouler = He lets himself be trifled with, be bluffed, be got the better of.

Le laisser-aller = Slackness.

Langage. **'Je vis de bonne soupe et non de beau langage'* = 'Fair words butter no parsnips.'

[The French is found in Molière, *Les Femmes savantes*, ii. 7, and the English equivalent in Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, v. 3.

Contrast: *C'est un bel instrument que la langue* = A ready tongue is a useful ally.]

Langue. *Ils tiraient la langue* = (lit.) They put their tongues out; (fig.) They showed signs of distress.

Il a la langue trop longue = He cannot hold his tongue.

Il a la langue bien pendue = He has the gift of the gab.

Langue. (*cont.*) *Jeter sa langue aux chiens* = To give up guessing (conundrums, &c.). (See *Chat.*)

La langue lui a fourché = He made a slip of the tongue.

Autant de langues qu'un homme sait parler, autant de fois est-il homme = The more languages a man knows, the more he is a man.

[This saying is ascribed to Charles V of Germany by Donaldson (*New Cratylus*, p. 10.).]

Qui langue a, à Rome va = Lose nothing for want of asking; A ready tongue gets you along in life.

[German: 'Lieber zweimal fragen als einmal irregehen.' (See *Rien.*)]

Lanterne. *Il veut nous faire prendre des vessies pour des lanternes* = He would have us believe that the moon is made of green cheese.

Large. *Prendre le large* = To run for the offing (nav.); To run away.

Au large = In the open sea. (See *Plein.*)

Larron. *Ils s'entendent comme larrons en foire* = They are as thick as thieves.

**L'occasion fait le larron* = Opportunity makes the thief; Keep yourself from opportunities and God will keep you from sins.

['How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes ill deeds done!'
SHAKESPEARE, *King John*, iv. 2.]

Qui dit menteur, dit larron = Show me a liar, and I'll show you a thief.

[German: 'Der Lügner und der Dieb wohnen unter einem Dache.']

Latin. *Latin de cuisine* = Dog Latin.

J'y perds mon latin = I cannot make it out; I am nonplussed; I can make neither head nor tail of it.

Être au bout de son latin (or, *rouleau*) = To be at one's wits' end; Not to know what to do, or say, next; To be nonplussed, up a tree.

Laver. *Il faut laver son linge sale en famille* = One should not wash one's dirty linen in public; It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest.

Lendemain. *Le plus beau lendemain ne nous rend pas la veille* = What is past is gone for ever.

Lettre. *Je lui ai dit la chose en toutes lettres* = I told him the matter plainly.

Ne prenez pas ce que je dis au pied de la lettre = Do not take what I say literally.

Lever. *J'en lèverais la main* = I would swear to it; I would take my oath to it.

[The oath in courts of justice is taken in many countries with the right hand raised, palm outwards. In England we kiss a Bible.]

Le président leva la séance = The chairman dissolved the meeting; The Speaker left the chair.

**À qui se lève matin Dieu prête la main* = It is the early bird that catches the worm. (See *Renard.*)

[Also: *Le premier levé est le premier servi.*]

Lèvre. *J'avais le mot sur le bord des lèvres* (or, *au bout de la langue*) = I had the word at the tip of my tongue.

Liard. *Il n'a pas un rouge liard* = He has not a brass farthing. (See *Radis.*)

Lièvre. *C'est là que gît le lièvre* = That is the main point; There's the rub.

**Il ne faut pas courir deux lièvres à la fois* = You must not have too many irons in the fire.

Il a une mémoire de lièvre = He has a memory like a sieve.

[Also: *Il est comme les lièvres, il perd la mémoire en courant. Une mémoire d'ange* = A long memory.]

Il veut prendre les lièvres au son du tambour = He makes a great noise about what should be kept secret; He divulges a plan which to succeed has to be kept secret.

Pour faire un civet prenez un lièvre = First catch your hare.

[The French is found in *Le Cuisinier français* (p. 40 of the 1651 edition). The English is always given as a quotation from Mrs. Glasse's *Cookery Book,* but her words are quite different.]

Ligne. *C'est un homme hors ligne* = He is a first-rate man. (See *Hors.*)

Il est en première ligne = He is in the front rank.

Linotte. *Il a une tête de linotte* = He is a hare-brained fellow.

Livre. *Traduire à livre ouvert* = To translate at sight.

Loi. *La loi n'est pas la même pour tout le monde* = There is one law for the rich and another for the poor.

Loin. *Revenir de loin* = 1. To come back from a distant place. 2. To recover from a very severe illness.

De loin en loin = At long intervals.

Long. **Tout s'use à la longue* = Everything wears out in time.

[*Tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse.*]

Il se promenait de long en large = He was walking up and down, to and fro.

[Also: *Il faisait les cent pas.*]

Il en sait trop long = He knows too much.

Il m'a raconté la chose tout au long = He told me every detail of the affair.

Il était étendu tout de son long = He was lying at full length.

Longer. *Longer la côte* = To sail along the coast.

Longueur. *Ce procès traîne en longueur* = That lawsuit is dragging on slowly.

Louer. **Qui se loue s'emboue* = Self-praise is no recommendation.

Loup. *Il marche à pas de loup* = He walks stealthily, like a thief in the night.

Il est connu comme le loup blanc = He is known to every one.

**Quand on parle du loup, on en voit la queue* (or, *il sort du bois*) = Speak of angels and you hear their wings; Talk of the devil, and he is sure to appear.

[German: 'Wenn man den Wolf nennt, so kommt er gerennt.']

Loup. (*cont.*)

**Le loup mourra dans sa peau* = A bad thing never dies; A bad man will die a bad man.

[Compare: 'Lupus pilum mutat, non mentem.' Erasmus (*Adagia*, 989) gives the Greek origin of this saying, *ὁ λύκος τὴν τρίχα, οὐ τὴν γνώμην ἀλλάττει*, but he quotes no author.]

Tenir le loup par la queue = To have hold of the sow by the wrong ear.

On fait toujours le loup plus gros qu'il n'est = A tale never loses in the telling.

**Il faut hurler avec les loups* = When we are at Rome we must do as Rome does; You must do as others do; He who kennels with wolves must howl.

['Evil communications corrupt good manners' (1 Cor. xv. 33). Paul quoted this iambic line from Menander's *Thais*, '*φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρήσθ' ὁμιλίαι κακαί.*'
The proverb about Rome is said to have originated with St. Ambrose, who, when he was asked by St. Augustine whether he should fast on Saturday or not when he was at Rome, although he was not accustomed to do so when at home, replied: 'When I am at home I do not fast on Saturday; but when I am at Rome I do, and I think you should follow the custom of every city you visit, if you would avoid scandal.' From this reply originated the saying: 'Cum Romae fueris Romano vive more' = When you shall be at Rome, live after the Roman fashion. Compare: 'Cretizandum est cum Crete' (translation of Polybius, viii. 21), and 'Si juxta claudum habites, subclaudicare disces.']

Tenir le loup par les oreilles = To be in a critical situation; To have caught a Tartar.

['Auribus lupum teneo.'—TERENCE, *Phormio*, iii. 2. 21.]

Il fait un froid de loup = It is terribly cold.

**Les loups ne se mangent pas entre eux* = Dog does not eat dog; There is honour among thieves. (See *Corsaire.*)

Renfermer le loup dans la bergerie = To set the fox to keep the geese.

[German: 'Man soll den Bock nicht zum Gärtner machen.'

'Were't not madness then to make
The fox surveyor of the fold?'
2 Henry VI, i. 252.]

Ils se sont mis dans la gueule du loup = They rushed into the lion's mouth.

C'est un vieux loup de mer = He is an old sea-dog.

Lundi. *Faire la Saint-Lundi* / *Fêter Saint-Lundi* / *Faire le Lundi* = To do no work on Monday; To take Monday off.

Lune. *Faire un trou à la lune* = 'To shoot the moon'; To flee from one's creditors. (See *Cloche.*)

Vouloir prendre la lune avec les dents = To attempt impossibilities.

['Prendre la lune aux dents seroit moins difficile.'—La Fontaine, *Le Roi Candaule.*]

Ne point aller chercher ce qu'on fait dans la lune = A woman should study housewifery before she studies astronomy.

[Molière, *Les Femmes savantes*, ii. 7. 568.
Compare: 'They which stare at the stars stumble upon the stones.']

M.

Mâcher. *Je ne lui ai pas mâché la chose* = I did not mince matters with him.

Je lui ai donné sa besogne toute mâchée = I gave him his work all ready cut out; I made his work as easy as possible for him.

Madame. *Elle fait la Madame* = She gives herself airs (of little girls).

Mai. *Mi-mai, queue d'hiver* = The middle of May has usually three cold days (called *Les saints de glace*, May 11, 12, and 13).

Maigre. *Faire maigre* = To abstain from meat.

Faire maigre chère = To have poor fare.

Maigre comme un clou = As thin as a lath.

Maille. *Il n'a ni sou ni maille* = He has not got a rap, a brass farthing.

Avoir maille à partir avec quelqu'un = To have a bone to pick (a crow to pluck) with some one.

[In the Middle Ages the table of the coins of France was:
2 mailles = 1 denier.
10 deniers = 1 sou.
20 sous = 1 livre.

Maille. (*cont.*) Thus, *Maille* (= mite) was the smallest coin and therefore could not be divided. Hence the saying means to have a quarrel with some one. Notice the old meaning of *partir* in this idiom = to divide (Lat. *partiri*).]

Maille à maille se fait l'haubergeon = Many a little makes a mickle. (See *Goutte* and *Petit.*)

Bonne la maille qui sauve le denier = 'Tis a good halfpenny that saves a penny; A penny saved is a penny gained.

Main. *Donnez-moi une poignée de main* = Shake hands with me.

Donnez-moi un coup de main = Give me a helping hand.

Vous n'y allez pas de main morte = You hit with a vengeance; You don't do things by halves; You go at it hammer and tongs.

Avoir un poil dans la main = To be very lazy (so that hair grows on the palm of the hand); To be a slacker.

Avoir la main heureuse = To be lucky at cards (*or* at other things).

Avoir la main rompue à quelque chose = To be well versed at something.

Je le connais de longue main = I have known him for a long time.

Il disparut en un tour de main = He disappeared in an instant, in a twinkling.

Il a une chambre grande comme la main = He has a room not big enough to swing a cat in.

En venir aux mains = To come to blows.

Bas les mains! = Hands off!

Les deux armées en sont aux mains = The two armies are in close combat, have come to close quarters.

Je me perds la main = I am getting rusty.

Je tirais au pistolet pour me faire la main = I practised pistol-shooting to get my hand in.

Il y a mis la dernière main = He put the finishing touch to it.

Main. (*cont.*)

Il a fait cela haut la main = He did it with the greatest ease.

Mettre la main à la pâte = To put one's shoulder to the wheel; To set to (a special piece of) work oneself.

Les voleurs firent main basse sur tous mes effets = The thieves laid hands on all my things.

Pour cela je vous baise les mains = As for that I will not do it; 'No, thank you!'

J'en mettrais la main au feu = I would swear to it; I would stake my life on it; I would take my dying oath about it.

Il est mieux de tendre la main que le cou = It is better to beg than steal.

[A reference to trial by ordeal.]

Mais.

Je n'en peux mais! = I cannot help it!

[*Mais* is here an adverb and shows its derivation from the Latin *magis*. The phrase literally means: 'I can do no more.']

Maison.

Faire maison neuve (or, *nette*) = To change all one's servants.

Il fait des demandes par-dessus les maisons = He makes most unreasonable demands; His demands are preposterous.

Maître.

**Tel maître, tel valet* = Like master, like man; Like well, like bucket.

['Selon le clerc est deu le maistre.'
VILLON, *Grand Testament*, 568.

'Such mistress, such Nan,
Such master, such man.'
TUSSER, *Five hundred points of good husbandry*.

Or: '*Tel couteau, tel fourreau.*'
German: 'Wie der Herr, so der Knecht.'
Latin: 'Qualis hera, tales pedisequae.'

'L'impudence des gens vient de celle des maîtres,
Du maître quel qu'il soit, peu, beaucoup ou zéro,
Le valet fut toujours et le singe et l'écho.'
PIRON.]

C'est une maîtresse femme = She is a superior woman.

[One who manages her business or subordinates capably, makes her servants obey her and do their work well, and is respected by them.]

Mal. **À qui mal veut, mal arrive* = Harm watch, harm catch ; Curses, like chickens, come home to roost.

[This proverb is said to be of Turkish origin. The Spanish equivalent is : 'Who sows thorns, let him not walk barefoot.' Comp. Psalms cix. 17. (See *Guillot.*)]

J'ai mal au cœur = I feel sick.

Vous prenez tout en mal = You put a wrong construction on everything.

Elle s'est trouvée mal = She fainted.

Elle est au plus mal = She is past recovery.

Sa sœur aînée n'est pas mal = Her elder sister is not bad-looking.

**Aux grands maux les grands remèdes* = Desperate diseases require desperate remedies.

[Hippocrates (Aphorism 6) says : "ἐς δὲ τὰ ἔσχατα νουσήματα αἱ ἔσχαται θεραπεῖαι ἐς ἀκριβείην κράτισται" = In bad maladies desperate remedies applied with care are the best.]

Malheur. **À quelque chose malheur est bon* = It is an ill wind that blows no one any good.

['À quelque chose sert le malheur.'—Montaigne, *Essais*, ii. 17.]

'J'ai connu le malheur et j'y sais compatir' = 'A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.'

[Of these two quotations, so similar in sense, the English was said first by Garrick in his 'Prologue on quitting the Stage', 1776. The French came soon after in 1785 from Guillard's *Œdipe à Colone*, ii. 4. Both owe something to Vergil (*Æneid*, i. 630) : 'Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.']

Pour surcroît (or, *comble*) *de malheur il tomba malade* = To crown his misfortunes he fell ill.

**Un malheur ne vient jamais seul* = Misfortunes never come singly ; It never rains but it pours.

[Ausonius talks of *Catenati labores*, i. e. misfortunes connected as by a chain.

Ital. : 'Benedetto è quel male che vien solo' = Blessed is that misfortune which comes alone.

'Nunc ego verum illud verbum esse experior vetus
Aliquid mali esse propter vicinum malum.'
Plautus, *Mercator*, l. 772.]

Il n'est qu'heur et malheur = That's the way of the world.

Malheur. (*cont.*) *Heur et malheur n'ont qu'un temps* = After annoy comes joy.

Manant. *C'est un manant* = He is a coarse, ill-educated boor.
[From *manens* = one remaining fixed to the soil, a villain, serf.]

Manche (*m.*) *Il branle dans le manche* (or, *au manche*) = He is no longer firmly established in his post; He is irresolute.

**Jeter le manche après la cognée* = To throw the rope after the bucket; To give up in despair.

Manche (*f.*) *Je ne me ferai pas tirer par la manche* = I shall not require much pressing.

C'est une autre paire de manches = That is quite another thing; That is a horse of another colour, another pair of shoes.

J'ai gagné la première manche = I won the first game (out of two or more).

Je l'ai dans ma manche = I have him at my disposal.

Manger. *Il mange comme quatre* = He eats like an ogre.

Il a mangé son pain blanc le premier = He had the happiest part of his life first. (See *Pain.*)

Manger son blé en herbe = To anticipate one's revenue.

Il a mangé de la vache enragée = He has suffered many privations; He has had a rough time of it. (See *Vache.*)

Il est très inquiet, il en perd le boire et le manger = He is very anxious, he has lost his appetite.

Il a l'air de me vouloir manger = He is looking daggers at me.

Manière. *Je l'ai rossé de la belle manière* (fam.) = I gave him a sound thrashing.

Il y a la manière = There's a way of doing it.

Manquer. *Vous me manquez* = I miss you.

Je vous manque = You miss me.

Il a manqué d'être pris = He was nearly caught.

C'est un avocat manqué = He is a would-be barrister; He is a failure as a barrister.

Manquer. *C'est un garçon manqué* = She is a tom-boy.

(*cont.*) *Ce serait manquer d'usage* = That would be a breach of good manners.

Il manque toujours d'usage = He lacks all knowledge of polite behaviour in society.

Il ne manquait plus que cela! = That crowns all! That is the last straw.

Quel coup manqué! = What a fiasco!

Un vêtement manqué = A misfit.

Manquer de peu c'est tout de même manquer = A miss is as good as a mile. (See *Âne.*)

Marchand. *C'est un marchand de soupe* = He is a regular Squeers.

[This is said of a private schoolmaster who, far from regarding his profession as an honourable one, follows it solely with a view to profit, by having few and inferior assistants, and by feeding his pupils cheaply and badly (thus making a profit on the *soup*). He looks upon teaching as the least important part of his work. Of course, this race of men is now entirely extinct!]

N'est pas marchand qui toujours gagne = We cannot always win; We must expect to meet with reverses sometimes.

Marché. *Par-dessus le marché* = Into the bargain; Over and above.

Il m'a mis le marché à la main = He told me I could take it or leave it; He made me decide one way or the other.

Est-ce marché fait? = Is it a bargain?

Vous en êtes quitte à bon marché = You came off cheaply.

Vous aurez bon marché de lui = You will easily get the better of him.

Je fais bon marché de cela = I hold that very cheap.

On n'a jamais bon marché d'une mauvaise marchandise = A bad thing is dear at any price; The best is the cheapest in the end; Ill ware is never cheap.

Marcher. *Il ne leur marche pas sur les pieds* = He does not run after them.

Marée. **Ce qui vient de flot s'en retourne de marée* = Fortune is as quick in going as in coming. (See *Flûte.*)

Mariée. *Il se plaint que la mariée est trop belle* = He complains that he has got too good a bargain.

Marmite. *Faire bouillir la marmite* = To keep the pot boiling.

Marotte. *Chacun a sa marotte* = Every one has his hobby.
[*Marotte* is a kind of bauble or rattle with a head on the end furnished with bells, which jesters carry.]

Mars. **Mars venteux et Avril pluvieux*
Font le Mai gai et gracieux =
March winds and April showers
Make way for May flowers.

Marteau. **Mieux vaut être marteau qu'enclume* = Better be striker than struck.

Être entre l'enclume et le marteau = To be in a dilemma; To be between the devil and the deep sea.

Graisser le marteau (or, *la patte*) = To tip the porter.
[There is the same idea in 'Palm oil'.]

Martel. *Il s'est mis martel en tête* = He made himself very uneasy.

Massacrer. *Il est d'une humeur massacrante* = He is as cross as two sticks.

Matière. *Il est bien enfoncé dans la matière* = He is very coarse, very prosaic.

La table des matières = The table of contents (of a book).

Matin. *Il partira un de ces quatre matins* = He will start one of these fine days.

Maure. *Traiter quelqu'un de Turc à Maure* = To treat a person brutally.
[As the Turks treated the Moors when they conquered the north of Africa. See Molière, *Précieuses ridicules*, 10.]

**À laver la tête d'un Maure* (or, *d'un âne*, or, *d'un nègre*) *on y perd sa lessive* = To endeavour to teach a fool is a waste of time; All your pains will not give a fool brains; It's a hopeless task.

Mèche. *Il a éventé* (or, *vendu*) *la mèche* = He has let the cat out of the bag; He has blown the gaff; He has given the show away.

Il n'y a pas mèche (pop.) = 'It's no go'; There is no doing it; There's not the ghost of a chance.

Médaille. *C'est le revers de la médaille* = That is the dark side of the picture.

Médard. **S'il pleut le jour de Saint Médard,*
Il pleut quarante jours plus tard.
S'il pleut le jour de Saint Gervais,
Il pleut quarante jours après =

'St. Swithin's day, gif yt do rain,
For forty days will yt remain.'

[Le jour de St. Médard = June 8.
Le jour de St. Gervais = June 19.
St. Swithin's Day = July 15.]

Médecin. *Voilà trois médecins qui ne vous trompent pas:*
Gaîté, doux exercice et modeste repas.

= The best doctors in the world are Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet, and Dr. Merriman.

[Swift, *Polite Conversation*, Dialogue ii.]

Méfiance. **La méfiance est mère de la sûreté* = Safe bind, safe find.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, iii. 18.]

Même. *Il buvait à même la bouteille* = He was drinking out of the bottle itself.

[This is an inversion for *à la bouteille même*. *Boire à même* is not usually used of cups or glasses, but of bottles, jugs, streams, &c. For it implies that the containing vessel itself is being used to drink out of, and not any smaller vessel. Thus *boire à même le verre* would suggest that a spoon or smaller receptacle was not used.
Compare *puiser à même le sac* = to take out of a sack by handfuls without using any smaller vessel to measure what one takes, hence to take a great deal out of it.]

Il est à même de vous comprendre = He is able to understand you.

Cela revient au même = That comes to the same thing.

C'est cela même = That is the very thing.

Faites de même = Do the same.

Ménage. *Ils font bon ménage* = They live happily together.
Elle fait le ménage = She is doing her housework.

Ménager. *'*Qui veut voyager loin ménage sa monture'* = Who wishes to go far spares his horse; He who wishes to live long avoids excess; Slow and steady wins the race.

[Racine, *Plaideurs*, i. 1.

'Animum relaxes: otium des corpori
Ut assuetam fortius praestes vicem.'
Phaedrus, Book iii, Prologue, l. 13.]

Mentir. **A beau mentir qui vient de loin* = A traveller may lie with impunity; Travellers tell fine tales.

**Quasi et presque empêchent les gens de mentir* = Almost and very nigh save many a lie.

'Il faut bonne mémoire après qu'on a menti' = Liars should have good memories.

[The French is a quotation from Corneille (*Menteur*, iv 5), who therein imitates Quintilian (iv. 2): 'Mendacem memorem esse oportere.']

Méprendre. *Québec, c'est Saint-Malo à s'y méprendre* (Max O'Rell) = You could easily mistake Quebec for St. Malo.

Mer. **Ce n'est pas la mer à boire* = It is not an impossibility; It is not so very difficult after all; Any fool could do that.

**Porter de l'eau à la mer* = To carry coals to Newcastle.

Mérite. *Remplir son mérite* = To act up to one's reputation.

Merle. **On ne prend pas les vieux merles à la pipée* = Old birds are not to be caught with chaff.

[German: 'Eine alte Katze läuft nicht in die Falle.']

Merveille. *Il se porte à merveille* = He is in splendid health.

Messe. **Près du moûtier, à messe le dernier* = The nearer the church, the farther from God.

Métier. *Il nous a servi un plat de son métier* (or, *de sa façon*) = He played us one of his tricks.

Métier. (*cont.*) **'À chacun son métier et les vaches seront bien gardées'* (FLORIAN, *Fables*, i. 12) = Let the cobbler stick to his last.

[The saying, 'Ne sutor ultra crepidam' (iudicet), arose from the tale of the cobbler who criticized the painting of a shoe in a picture of Apelles. On his starting to criticize other parts of the picture, the painter told him that a cobbler should not judge above the shoe. Pliny (bk. 35) says: 'Ne supra crepidam sutor iudicaret: quod et ipsum in proverbium venit.'
Cicero says: 'Quam quisque norit artem in hac se exerceat.'
Also: *Quarante métiers, cinquante malheurs.*]

Qui métier a, rente a = Keep your shop, and your shop will keep you.

[The English is found in Chapman's *Eastward Ho!* i. 1.
German: 'Handwerk hat goldenen Boden.']

Mettre. *Mettez cent francs* = Make it £4.

Il se mettrait en quatre pour ses amis = He would do anything for his friends.

Il se met bien = He dresses well.

On veut nous mettre dedans (fam.) = They want to entrap us, to take us in.

Midi. *Chercher midi à quatorze heures* = To make (*or*, seek) difficulties where there are none; To look for grapes on thorns; To go on a wild-goose chase.

[This expression has its origin in the old custom, still in use in some parts of Italy, of reckoning the hours of the day consecutively from 1 to 24, beginning at sunset. Hence, noon may vary from the sixteenth to the twentieth hour, but is never the fourteenth. Voltaire's epigram for a sundial is very well known, but may bear repetition:—

'Vous qui vivez dans ces demeures,
Êtes-vous bien? tenez-vous y,
Et n'allez pas chercher midi
À quatorze heures.'

Compare Latin: 'In scirpo nodum quaerere' = To search for a knot in a rush.]

Chacun connaît midi à sa porte = Each one knows his own business best.

Mien. *J'y ai mis du mien, mettez-y du vôtre* = I have given way a bit, meet me half-way; I have done my share at it, now it's your turn.

Mieux. **Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien* = Leave well alone.

['Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.'
King Lear, i. 4.
Compare the Italian epitaph: 'Stavo ben, ma per star meglio sto qui'=I was well, but, in order to be better, here I am. German: 'Wer wohl sitzt, der rücke nicht.']

Ils criaient à qui mieux mieux = Each was trying to shout louder than the other; Each tried to drown the others' voices.

Je ne demande pas mieux = Nothing would give me greater pleasure.

Elle est mieux que sa sœur = She is prettier than her sister.

Faute de mieux = For want of something better.

Tant mieux = So much the better.

Il est au mieux avec son médecin = He is on the best terms with his doctor.

On ne peut mieux = As well as possible; It could not be better.

Vous arrivez on ne peut mieux = You could not have come at a more opportune moment.

Milieu. *Le juste milieu* = The golden mean.

Au beau milieu = In the very midst.

Vertu gît au milieu = Do not rush into extremes.

[The French was used by Louis-Philippe (Jan. 29, 1831).
Compare: 'Aurea mediocritas'—Horace, *Odes*, ii. 10, and 'Virtus est medium vitiorum, et utrinque reductum'—Hor. *Epist.* i. 18. 9.
'In medio tutissimus ibis' (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ii. 137)=*Allez par le milieu et vous ne tomberez pas.*
Compare the English: When slovenly girls get tidy, they polish the bottoms of saucepans.]

Mine. *Faire bonne mine à mauvais jeu* = To put a good face on the matter; To make the best of a bad job.

Il fait mine de ne pas comprendre = He pretends not to understand.

Il nous a fait mauvaise (or, *grisé*) *mine* = He looked black (sour) at us; He did not receive us well.

Cet homme a très mauvaise mine = 1. That man looks a regular ruffian. 2. That man looks very ill.

Mine. (*cont.*) *Il ne paye pas de mine* = His appearance is against him.

Ne jugez pas sur la mine = Do not judge by appearances.

['Garde-toi, tant que tu vivras,
De juger des gens sur la mine.'
LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, vi. 5.]

Elle fait la mine = She is sulking.

Mise. *Ces chapeaux ne sont plus de mise* = Those hats are no longer in vogue, no longer worn.

Misère. *Je lui ai prêté cent francs—une misère, quoi!* = I lent him four pounds—a mere nothing.

Mode. *Elle est ma tante à la mode de Bretagne* = She is my father's (*or*, mother's) first cousin; She is my first cousin once removed.

Elle est ma nièce à la mode de Bretagne = She is the daughter of my first cousin.

[These phrases are used of any very distant relationship.]

Moi. *Le moi est haïssable* = Egotism is hateful.

[A saying of Pascal (*Pensées*, vii. 455, ed. Brunschvicg). The Port-Royal commentator adds that by 'moi' Pascal meant amour-propre or pride. It was used also by F. Brunetière in speaking of Jules Lemaître. For this use compare Maurice Barrès' trilogy, *Le Culte du moi*.]

Moindre. *C'est là son moindre défaut* = That is not a great weakness of hers (*or*, his); That is the last thing you can reproach her (*or*, him) with.

[LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, i. 1.]

Moine. *Le moine répond comme l'abbé chante* = As the old cock crows so the young cock chucks; The clerk always says 'Amen' to the parson.

Moineau. *Deux moineaux sur même épi ne sont pas longtemps amis* = Two of a trade seldom agree.

['Καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων
Καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονέει καὶ ἀοιδὸς ἀοιδῷ.'
HESIOD, *Opera et dies*, 25.

Also: *Hippocrate dit oui; Galien dit non;* with which may be compared

'Who shall decide when doctors disagree?'
POPE, *Epistle*, iii.

'Grammatici certant et adhuc sub iudice lis est.'
HORACE, *Ars Poetica*, 78.]

Moineau. (*cont.*) *Il tire sa poudre aux moineaux* = He wastes his trouble for nothing.

Mois. *Tous les 36 du mois* = Once in a blue moon.

Moment. *Je le ferai à mes moments perdus* = I shall do it in my spare time, at odd times, whenever I have a moment to spare.

Monde. *C'est vieux comme le monde* = It is as old as the hills.

Vous dites des choses de l'autre monde = You say most out-of-the-way things.

Il y a un monde fou = There is a terrible crowd. (See *Fou.*)

Vous moquez-vous du monde de parler ainsi? = Are you making fun of people (are you serious) in speaking thus? Do you take people for a pack of fools?

Si vous obtenez cinq francs, c'est le bout du monde = If you get five francs, it is the utmost; You will get five francs at the very outside.

Si elle a trente ans c'est tout le bout du monde = She may be thirty at the very outside.

On ne peut contenter tout le monde et son père = One cannot satisfy everybody, all the world and his wife.

['Parbleu, dit le meunier, est bien fou du cerveau
Qui prétend contenter tout le monde et son père.'
LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, iii. 1.]

Monnaie. *Il lui a rendu la monnaie de sa pièce* = He paid him back in his own coin.

Mont. *Par monts et par vaux* = Up hill and down dale.

Montée. **À grande montée grande descente* = The higher the rise, the gréater the fall; He who climbs too high is near a fall.

['Vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself.'
SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*, i. 7.

Also: '*La Roche Tarpéienne est près du Capitole.*'—JOUY, *La Vestale*, iii. 3, published in 1807. But Mirabeau on May 22, 1790, had made the comparison before this in a speech to the Constituent Assembly. The Tarpeian Rock from which criminals

Montée. (*cont.*) were hurled to the ground below was a few steps from the Capitol, where victorious generals were crowned in the temple of Jupiter.]

Montrer. *Montrer le soleil avec un flambeau* = To paint the lily; To hold a farthing rushlight to the sun.

Morceau. **Morceau avalé n'a plus de goût* = Past services are soon forgotten.

Mordre. *Se mordre les doigts* = To repent what one has done; To rue bitterly.

Se mordre la langue = To repent what one has said.

Ça ne mord pas (fam.) = I am not to be caught, to be taken in.

Mort. *Il est mort de sa belle mort* = He died a natural death.

Il est à l'article de la mort = He is at the point of death, at death's door.

Mort n'épargne ni petit ni grand = Death is the great leveller.

[German: 'Arm und reich,
Dem Tod ist's gleich.']

Quand on compte sur les souliers d'un mort on risque de marcher pieds nus = It's an ill thing to wait for dead men's shoes; He pulls with a long rope that waits for another's death.

[Also: *Qui s'attend à l'écuelle d'autrui risque fort de mal dîner.*]

Avoir la mort dans l'âme = To be grieved to death; To be overwhelmed with grief.

La Mort, sans phrase = Death and no remarks.

[The reported words of the Abbé Sieyès on voting for the death of Louis XVI. The Abbé was noted for his *bons mots*. On being asked what he had done during the Reign of Terror, he answered: 'J'ai vécu' = I kept my head on my shoulders.]

Après la mort le médecin = To shut the stable-door after the steed is stolen.

La mort saisit le vif = The heirs inherit all a dead man's goods.

Morveux. **Qui se sent morveux se mouche* (pop.) = If the cap fits, wear it. (See *Galeux.*)

Mot. *Ils en sont venus aux gros mots* = They came to high words.

Mot. (*cont.*) **Qui ne dit mot consent* = Silence gives consent.
[German: 'Wer schweigt bejaht.']

Il a toujours le mot pour rire = He is ever ready with a joke; He is full of fun.

Il a 40,000 *francs de rente au bas mot* = He has £1,600 a year at the very least.

**À bon entendeur demi-mot suffit* (or, *salut*) = A word to the wise is enough; *Verbum sapienti satis.*

Il entend à demi-mot = He can take a hint.

Ils se sont donné le mot = They have passed the word round; They have agreed beforehand what to say.

Tranchons le mot = In plain English; Not to mince matters; To put it plainly.

C'est mon dernier mot = That is the last concession I can make; I will not take less.

Il sait le fin mot de tout cela = He understands the upshot of all this.

Ne soufflez pas mot! = Do not breathe a word!

En deux mots = To cut a long story short.

Des mots longs d'une toise = Words as long as your arm.
[Racine, *Plaideurs*, i. 1.]

Je ne mâche pas mes mots = I don't mince matters; I call a spade a spade.

À mots couverts = Ambiguously.

Mouche. *Les grosses mouches passent à travers la toile de la justice, mais les petites y sont prises* = One man may steal a horse, while another dare not look over the hedge; Justice will whip a beggar, but bow to a lord; One does the scath, another has the harm; The crow gets pardoned, and the dove has the blame.
['Où la guêpe a passé, le moucheron demeure.'
La Fontaine, *Fables*, ii. 16.
'Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.'
Hor. *Epist.* i. 2. 14.
Italian: 'Un fa il peccato, l'altro la penitenza.']

**Vous faites d'une mouche un éléphant* = You make a mountain out of a molehill.
['Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.'
Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 139.]

Mouche. (*cont.*) *Quelle mouche vous pique?* = What irritates you? What whim have you got into your head?

Il a pris la mouche = He is in a huff; He got offended.

**On prend plus de mouches avec du miel qu'avec du vinaigre* = More is done by kindness than by harshness.

[A favourite saying of Henri IV.]

C'est une fine mouche = He is a sly dog, a deep one, a dark horse. (See *Compère.*)

C'est la mouche du coche = He is a regular busybody; The worst wheel makes the most noise. (See *Coche* and *Bruit.*)

Faire mouche = To hit the bull's-eye.

Moudre. *Il viendra moudre à notre moulin* = He will be in want of us some day.

Moulin. *C'est un vrai moulin à paroles* = She is a regular chatterbox; He is a regular wind-bag.

Mourir. '*Un gros serpent mordit Aurelle.*
Que croyez-vous qu'il arriva?
Qu'Aurelle en mourût? Bagatelle!
Ce fut le serpent qui creva.'

Compare Goldsmith's *Elegy on a Mad Dog*:

'The man recovered of his bite,
The dog it was that died.'

[The origin of both these is a Greek epigram of Demodochus about a snake biting a Cappadocian and dying, because the noxious blood of the man was more poisonous than his own. Voltaire parodied the French epigram thus:

'Un jour au bas fond d'un vallon
Un serpent mordit Jean Fréron.
Que pensez-vous qu'il arriva?
Ce fut le serpent qui creva.']

Quand on est mort c'est pour longtemps = Better do it now before it is too late.

[Mascarille says in *Le Dépit Amoureux*, v. 4: 'On ne meurt qu'une fois et c'est pour si longtemps.']

Moutarde. *Il m'a fait monter la moutarde au nez* = He irritated me; He made me lose my temper.

Moutarde. *C'est de la moutarde après dîner* = It comes too late to be of any use ; It is a day after the fair.

(*cont.*)

[Also : *Arriver après la bataille comme Grouchy.*
'Depugnato proelio venire.'—PLAUTUS, *Menaechmi*, v. 6. 30.
'Κατόπιν ἑορτῆς ἥκομεν.' = We have come after the feast.—PLATO, *Gorgias*, 447 A.]

Moutardier. *Il se croit le premier moutardier du pape* = He thinks no small beer of himself.

Mouton. **Revenons à nos moutons* = But to return to our subject.

[The Judge in the fifteenth-century farce, *Maistre Pierre Pathelin*, (verse 1191) says : 'Revenons à ces moutons.' This farce has been attributed without foundation to Pierre Blanchet. M. F. Génin in his edition (1854) gives 1460 as the date, and Antoine de la Sale as the author. It was adapted in 1706 by Brueys and Palaprat, under the title of *L'Avocat Patelin*. See also RÉGNIER, *Sat.* ii , and Martial, vi. 19 : 'It is time, Postumus, to say something of my three goats.']

Faire comme les moutons de Panurge = To follow one another like sheep.

Moyen. *Il n'y a pas moyen* = It cannot be done.

Il fait valoir ses moyens = 1. He makes the best of his talents. 2. He boasts of his talents.

Cet enfant a peu de moyens = That child is not clever.

Mur. *Je l'ai mis au pied du mur* = I drove him into a corner ; I made him decide one way or the other.

C'est au pied du mur qu'on connaît le maçon = A good workman does his work as well in parts that are not seen as in those that are.

Muraille. **Muraille blanche, papier de fou* = Fools write their names on walls.

[Late Latin : 'Stultorum calami carbones, moenia chartae.']

Muser. **Qui beaucoup muse peu file* = Rust wastes more than use ; Great dreamers are little doers.

Musique. *Il est réglé comme un papier de musique* = He is as regular as clockwork.

Mutisme. *Se renfermer dans le mutisme* = Not to say a word ; To refuse to answer.

N.

Nage. *Je suis tout en nage* = I am in a thorough perspiration ; I have not a dry thread on me.

Navette. *Faire la navette* = To go to and fro between two places several times.

Nécessité. **Nécessité n'a pas de loi* = Needs must when the devil drives.

Nèfle. *Avoir quelque chose pour des nèfles* (fam.) = To buy something for a mere song.

Nerf. *Vous me donnez* (or, *portez*) *sur les nerfs* = You get on my nerves ; You rile me (fam.)

Net. *Mettez cela au net* = Make a fair copy of that.

Il a les mains nettes (fig.) = He is honest ; His hands are clean.

Refuser net = To refuse point-blank.

Un cheval sain et net = A horse sound in wind and limb.

Nez. *Il a un pied de nez* (fam.) = He pulls a long face, looks foolish.

[Also : *Il fait un nez.*]

Il a fait un pied de nez (fam.) = He put his fingers to his nose ; 'He cut a snook'.

Ce coup l'a fait saigner du nez = That blow made his nose bleed.

Il a saigné du nez = (lit.) His nose bled ; (fig.) His heart failed him.

À vue de nez = By rule of thumb.

Il veut toujours fourrer son nez partout (fam.) = He wants to have his finger in every pie. (See *Fourrer.*)

On voulait lui tirer les vers du nez = They wished to pump him.

Vous vous y casserez le nez = 1. You will fall on your face. 2. You will knock up against something. 3. You will fail in that.

Porter le nez au vent = To stare about aimlessly.

Il me regarda sous le nez = He stared me in the face.

Nez. (*cont.*) *Il me l'a jeté au nez* = He cast it in my teeth.

Il a le nez fin = 1. He has a good nose. 2. He is far-sighted, sagacious.

**Qui coupe son nez dégarnit son visage* = It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest; He who cuts off his nose spites his own face.

[Also: *S'arracher le nez pour faire dépit à son visage.*]

Il me ferma la porte au nez = He shut the door in my face.

Il lui en pend autant au nez = He may expect as much (something unpleasant); He will fare no better.

Niche. *Il leur fait des niches* = He irritates them by silly acts.

[*Faire la nique* = to jeer at. *Nique* and *niche* are doublets as are hunk and hunch in English.]

Nid. *On n'a plus trouvé que le nid* = They found the birds flown.

Nitouche. *Elle fait la sainte Nitouche* = She plays the innocent; She looks as if butter would not melt in her mouth; She looks very demure.

[*Sainte Nitouche* is derived from *sainte n'y touche*, shortened from *une sainte qui n'y touche pas.* See *Toucher.*]

Noblesse. *Noblesse oblige* = Those who belong to the upper classes should prove it by their behaviour.

['La naissance n'est rien où la vertu n'est pas.'
MOLIÈRE, *Le Festin de Pierre*, iv. 6.]

Noce. *Je n'ai jamais été à pareille noce* (or, *fête*) = I never had such a time of it.

Il a fait la noce toute la semaine = He has had a high old time of it all the week; He has been on the spree all the week.

[Literally, to enjoy oneself as if one were *a guest at a wedding*, where there is plenty of merriment, food, and drink.]

Je ne suis pas à la noce = I am not enjoying myself at all; I am in an embarrassing position.

Noël. **'Tant crie l'on Noël qu'il vient'* (Villon) = Long looked for comes at last; That is coming—like Christmas.

Noël. (*cont.*) **Quand Noël est vert, les Pâques seront blanches* = When the winter is mild, the spring will be wintry.
[*Qui voit à Noël les moucherons verra à Pâques les glaçons.*]

Noir. *Voir tout en noir* = To look on the black side of things; To have the blues.
[Opposite to: *voir tout en rose*, or, *voir tout couleur de rose*. (See *Rouge*.)]
Broyer du noir = To have the blues; To feel very sad; To be in the dumps.
**Deux noirs ne font pas un blanc* = Two wrongs do not make a right.

Nom. *Nom d'un petit bonhomme!* (fam.) = By Jingo!
Voilà un nom à coucher dehors (*avec un billet de logement dans la poche*) = That's a name too ugly for words; That's an outlandish name if you like.

Nombre. *Tout fait nombre* = Every little helps.

Normand. *C'est répondre en Normand* = That is an evasive answer.
Être normand = To be very cunning.
À Normand Normand et demi = Set a thief to catch a thief. (See *Corsaire*.)

Note. *Après ça, quelle note à payer, mes amis!* = There will be the devil to pay for this.

Nourrice. *Elle dit qu'elle a vingt ans.—Et les mois de nourrice!* (fam.) = She says she is twenty.—And the rest!

Nouvelle. *Goûtez-moi ce vin; vous m'en direz des nouvelles* (fam.) = You just taste this wine, you don't get wine like that every day; What do you think of that for wine, my boy?

Noyau. **Il faut casser le noyau pour avoir l'amande* = Nothing is obtained without an effort.

Nue. *Tomber des nues* = To be astounded.

Nuire. **Ce qui nuit à l'un sert à l'autre* = What is one man's meat is another man's poison.
['Quod alî cibus est, aliis fuat acre venenum.'
LUCRETIUS, iv. 639.
Ce qui fait le bonheur des uns fait le 'douloir' des autres.]

Nuit. **La nuit porte conseil* = Time will show a plan; Sleep upon it; Seek advice of your pillow.

Numéro. *C'est du bon numéro* (pop.) = He is the right stuff; He's the sort.

O.

Œil. *Se fourrer le doigt dans l'œil* (pop.) = To deceive oneself blindly.

[Sometimes *jusqu'au coude* is added.]

Il a les yeux au beurre noir (pop.) = He has a couple of black eyes; He has his eyes in mourning.

[Also: *Il a les yeux pochés.*]

Je ne vois pas cela d'un bon œil = I do not look favourably upon that.

Cela saute aux yeux = That is evident, obvious; It is as clear as noonday.

Je l'ai regardé entre les deux yeux = I looked him straight in the face; I stared at him.

Entrer à l'œil dans un théâtre (fam.) = To get into a theatre on the nod (i. e. gratis).

Avoir le compas dans l'œil = To have a good eye for distances.

Elle a des yeux à la perdition de son âme = Her eyes are so lovely that they will be her ruin.

Vous ne voyez point votre chapeau? Mais il vous crève les yeux! = You do not see your hat? Why, it stares you in the face! (It's just under your nose.)

La lumière me tire les yeux = The light tries my eyes.

Il ne le fera pas pour vos beaux yeux = He will not do it for you for nothing.

Il l'aime pour les beaux yeux de sa cassette = He loves her for her money alone.

[Molière, *L'Avare*, v. 3.]

Nous convînmes de cela entre quatre veux = We agreed to that between ourselves.

Œil. (*cont.*)

Je m'en bats l'œil (pop.) = I don't care a straw for it.

[Also : *Je m'en soucie comme d'une guigne,* or *de mes premiers souliers ; Je m'en fiche un peu.*]

Il a les yeux battus = He has a tired look about his eyes.

Il a les yeux cernés = He has dark circles round his eyes.

Des yeux à fleur de tête = Goggle eyes. (See *Fleur.*)

Ouvrez l'œil, et le bon ! (fam.) = Look out !

Cela lui a tapé dans l'œil (pop.) = That took his fancy ; He was much struck by that.

Il a un œil de lynx = He can see through a brick wall.

Cela lui a coûté les yeux de la tête = That cost him a mint of money. (See *Fou.*)

Œuf.

**Donner un œuf pour avoir un bœuf* = To give a sprat to catch a herring (*or,* mackerel).

[Also : *Supporter peu pour avoir tout.*]

**Faire d'un œuf un bœuf* = To make a mountain out of a molehill.

Il tondrait sur un œuf = He would skin a flint. (See *Huile* and *Cheveux.*)

Œuvre.

**La fin couronne l'œuvre* = The end crowns all ; All's well that ends well.

Mettez la main à l'œuvre = Put your shoulder to the wheel.

**À l'œuvre on connaît l'artisan* = A carpenter is known by his chips ; The proof of the pudding is in the eating ; Handsome is as handsome does.

[La Fontaine, *Fables,* i. 21, 'Les frelons et les mouches à miel.']

Oindre.

**Oignez vilain, il vous poindra :*
Poignez vilain, il vous oindra. =
A churl will be insolent if well-treated, but servile if ill-treated.

[An old saying used by the French nobles during the middle ages and found in a collection of proverbs of the thirteenth century.—Rab. i. 21. The Duc de Bourbon, in speaking before the États Généraux in 1484, said : 'Je connais le

Oindre. (*cont.*) caractère des vilains. S'ils ne sont opprimés, il faut qu'ils oppriment.'

Comp.: 'Tender-handed stroke a nettle,
And it stings you for your pains;
Grasp it like a man of mettle,
And it soft as silk remains.'

AARON HILL, *Verses written on a window in Scotland.*]

Oiseau. *Il a battu les buissons, un autre a pris l'oiseau* = He did the work and another had the profit.

[Donatus in his *Life of Virgil* quotes the famous line: 'Sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves.' Hesiod says of drones: "ἀλλότριον κάματον σφετέρην ἐς γαστέρ' ἀμῶνται" = Into their own bellies they scrape together the labour of others. The Talmud says: 'One says grace and another eats'; the New Testament: 'One soweth, another reapeth.' The Duke of Bedford, brother of Henry V, is reported to have said: 'Je serois bien marri d'avoir battu les buissons et qu'un autre eust les oisillons' = 'Shall I beat the bush and another take the bird?' when it was proposed to him to give up the Duke of Orleans to the Burgundians.]

À tout oiseau son nid est beau = Home is home, be it ever so homely. (See *Chez.*)

'Aux petits des oiseaux il donne leur pâture' = He that sends mouths sends meat.

[RACINE, *Athalie*, ii. 7. The parody of Racine's two lines—

'Aux petits des oiseaux il donne leur pâture
Et sa bonté s'étend sur toute la nature.'—

by Léon Gozlan is worth repeating:

'Aux petits des oiseaux il donne leur pâture,
Mais sa bonté s'arrête à la littérature;'

which may be rendered: God sees that little birds get their food, but He draws the line at authors.]

À vue d'oiseau = A bird's-eye view.

À vol d'oiseau = As the crow flies.

Oisiveté. **'L'oisiveté est la mère de tous les vices'* = 'For Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do'; Idleness is the root of all evil.

[The French is a quotation from Collé, *La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV*, iii. 1, and the English from Watts's *Divine Songs*. Also: *Négligence mène déchéance* = Idle men tempt the devil, and *Qui ne fait rien apprend à mal faire.*
German: 'Müssiggang ist aller Laster Anfang.']

On. On *est un sot* = 'They-say-so' is half a liar.

[Note that there is no liaison after *On* here. Contrast: Common fame is seldom to blame.]

Ongle. *Il a de l'esprit jusqu'au bout des ongles* = He is witty to the tips of his fingers; He is extremely witty.

Il a bec et ongles = He will fight with beak and claw, tooth and nail.

Onguent. **Dans les petites boîtes les bons onguents* = Small parcels hold fine wares. (See *Aune.*)

Opiner. *Il opine du bonnet* = He agrees with the previous speakers without saying a word.

[From the custom of judges who agreed with the decision of a brother judge taking off their caps and saying nothing. It is also said of a subordinate who always agrees with his superior.]

Or. *C'est de l'or en barres* = It's as safe as the Bank of England.

Ordre. *Ce général a souvent été mis à l'ordre du jour* = That general has often been mentioned in dispatches.

Oreille. *Il se fera tirer l'oreille* = He will require pressing.

Il se retira l'oreille basse = He went away crest-fallen.

J'ai les oreilles rebattues de cela = I am tired of hearing that.

Il dort sur les deux oreilles = (lit.) He sleeps soundly; (fig.) His mind is quite easy.

Il n'écoute que d'une oreille = He pays very little attention to what is being said.

Ne venez pas ainsi me corner aux oreilles = Do not come and din it into my ears in that way.

Il fait la sourde oreille = He turns a deaf ear; He pretends not to hear.

Je n'entends pas de cette oreille-là = I will not listen to that.

Par-dessus les oreilles = Over head and ears.

Autant lui en pend à l'oreille = He may expect the same (something unpleasant). (Compare *Nez.*)

Oreille. (*cont.*) *Les oreilles ont dû vous corner* (*tinter*) = Your ears must have burned.

Je lui frotterai les oreilles = I will twist his tail for him.

Il a l'oreille dure = He is hard of hearing.

Il a l'oreille juste = He has a good ear (for music).

Orfèvre. **'Vous êtes orfèvre, Monsieur Josse!'* = That is a bit of special pleading; That is not disinterested advice; There's nothing like leather!

[Molière, *L'Amour Médecin*, i. 1. This quotation refers to Sganarelle's daughter who suffers from an incurable lowness of spirits. All his neighbours give him advice as to how to cure her; among them, Monsieur Josse, a jeweller, suggests that a fine necklace of diamonds or rubies would undoubtedly cure her. The father, distracted though he be, is not so far gone as not to see through this remark, and he replies in the words that have since become proverbial.]

Orgueil. **Il n'est orgueil que de sot enrichi* = Set a beggar on horseback, he'll ride to the devil.

[Also: *Il n'y a rien de plus orgueilleux qu'un riche qui a été gueux.*

German: 'Kommt ein Bettler auf den Gaul,
Wird er stolz wie König Saul.']

Orme. **Attendez-moi sous l'orme* = You may wait for me till doomsday.

[In feudal times an elm was often planted in the middle of the village, beneath which all the public acts of the spot took place, especially the judgement of misdemeanours. So if a villager were summoned to appear there he would be unlikely to come.]

Ortie. *Rabelais jeta le froc aux orties* = Rabelais was an unfrocked priest.

Ôter. *Ôte-toi de là que je m'y mette* = You get out and let me get in.

[Origin unknown; probably le Vicomte de Ségur first used it. Comp. Sancho Panza, 'Imitando al juego de los muchachos que dicen "Salta tú y dámela tú" doy un salto del gobierno.']

Oublier. *Oublions le passé* = Let bygones be bygones.

Ours. *C'est un ours mal léché* = He is an ill-licked cub; He is an ill-bred (*or*, ill-shapen) fellow.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, xi. 7; Bears were supposed to shape their young by licking them continually.]

Ours. (*cont.*) *C'est le pavé de l'ours* = Save me from my friends.

['Rien n'est si dangereux qu'un ignorant ami,
Mieux vaudrait un sage ennemi.'
La Fontaine, *Fables*, viii. 10.

An old gardener, feeling lonely, had adopted a bear as a companion. One day, when his master is asleep, the bear sees a fly on his face; he tries to drive it away, but it declines to move, so he takes up a huge paving-stone and kills the fly—and his master too. Compare: *On n'est jamais trahi que par les siens.*

Outrance. *Une guerre à outrance* = A war to the knife, to the bitter end, to the death.

[It is one of the curiosities of English journalism that this locution is nearly always printed *à l'outrance* in our public press. This is a serious solecism, as is the almost equally common error of confusing *le moral* and *la morale*.]

Ouvrier. **Mauvais ouvrier n'a jamais bons outils* = A bad workman always blames his tools.

Ouvrir. *Il traduit à livre ouvert* = He translates at sight.

P.

Paille. *Tout y va, la paille et le blé* = He spends all he has.
Il mourra sur la paille = He will die in the gutter.
Il est sur la paille = He is exceedingly poor.
Tirons à la courte paille = Let us draw lots.
**Cela enlève la paille* = 'That takes the cake.'

[The French is hardly as popular an expression as the English, which might be rendered in French by *décrocher la timbale*. Quitard derives *paille* from *paile*, a kind of rich cloth given as a prize in athletic contests. Littré imagines it originated with amber, which has the property of raising light objects, such as straw. Madame de Sévigné writes (13th Jan. 1672): 'Racine a fait une comédie qui s'appelle Bajazet et qui enlève la paille.' The English expression is said to come from the custom of negroes, when giving a ball, to provide a cake to be given to the best-dressed couple. The competitors walk round and are judged by the other guests. Hence the term cake-walk. See *Échelle*.]

Pain. *Cet homme est bon comme le pain* = That man is goodness itself; An angel of goodness.
Il a mangé son pain blanc le premier = He had the

Pain. (*cont.*)

best of his life first; His happiest days are over; He has had his cake.

[In many parts of the Continent white bread is not the matter of course that it is in England; brown or black bread is the usual fare of the poorer classes.]

**Tel grain, tel pain* = What you sow, you must mow.

On lui a fait passer le goût du pain (fam.) = They killed him.

C'est pain bénit = It serves you (him, her, them) right.

Il a du pain sur la planche = He has saved money; He has enough to live upon; He has put something by for a rainy day; There is plenty of work for him to do.

**De tout s'avise à qui pain faut* (*manque*) = Necessity is the mother of invention.

['Magister artis ingenique largitor
Venter.'

PERSIUS, *Prologue*, 10.

Compare G. Farquhar, *The Twin Rivals*, 1.]

**Pain tant qu'il dure, vin à mesure* = Eat at pleasure, drink by measure.

**Il ne vaut pas le pain qu'il mange* = He is not worth his salt.

Il sait son pain manger = He knows on which side his bread is buttered.

**C'est un long jour qu'un jour sans pain* = 'Tis a long lane that has no turning.

**Pain dérobé réveille appétit* = Stolen joys are sweet.

'Pain qu'on dérobe et qu'on mange en cachette
Vaut mieux que pain qu'on cuit et qu'on achète.'

LA FONTAINE, *Les Troqueurs*.]

Je ne mange pas de ce pain-là = I don't go in for that sort of thing.

Pair.

Hors de pair = Beyond all comparison; Above the level of others.

Traiter quelqu'un de pair à compagnon = To be hail-fellow-well-met with any one; To treat any one on an equal footing.

Pair. (*cont.*) *Je vais entrer dans cette famille au pair* = I am going to live with that family without salary, but for my board and lodging only.

Paire. **Les deux font la paire* (fam.) = They are well matched; *Arcades ambo.*

Paître. **Je l'ai envoyé paître* (fam.) = I sent him about his business.

Paix. *Paix et peu* = Anything for a quiet life.

Panier. **Adieu paniers, vendanges sont faites* = You come too late, it is all over.

[The chorus of an old glee sung by the grape-pickers when their labours were finished. Comp. RABELAIS, *Gargantua*, xxvii.]

Vous me donnez le dessus du panier = You give me the best, the pick.

[*Le dessous du panier* = the refuse.]

C'est un panier percé = He is a spendthrift.

Panneau. *Donner dans le panneau* = To fall into the trap.

Panse. *Il n'a pas fait une panse d'a aujourd'hui* = He has not done a stroke all day.

[*Panse d'a* = the round part of an *a*.]

Papier. *Il n'est pas dans mes petits papiers* = He is not in my good books (*or*, graces).

['Oh! pourvu que je sois
Dans les petits papiers du *Mercure François*.'
ROSTAND, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, ii. 8.]

Pâques. *À Pâques ou à la Trinité* = Some time or other; At a very uncertain date and perhaps never.

Paquet. *Je lui ai donné son paquet* = I gave him the sack.

Faire un paquet = To make a parcel.

Faire son paquet = To pack up and go.

Par. *De par le roi* = By the king's command.

['De par le roi, défense à Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu.'

A cynical couplet that arose when Louis XV prohibited pilgrimages to the tomb of François de Pâris, behind the church of St. Médard in Paris, because of the miracles reported to have been performed there by the Convulsionnaires.]

Paraître. *Sans qu'il y paraisse, c'est un homme fort instruit* = Without making any show he is a very well-informed man.

À ce qu'il me paraît = As far as I can judge, see.

Le livre vient de paraître = The book is just out, just published.

Il n'y paraît plus = There is no trace of it.

Il n'y paraît pas = One would not have thought it.

Pareil. *J'ai le pareil* = I have one like it.

Je vous rendrai la pareille (or, *le réciproque*) = 1. I will pay you out. 2. I will do the same for you.

On n'a jamais vu chose pareille = One never heard of such a thing.

Paresseux. **Ce sont les paresseux qui font le plus de chemin* = Lazy people take the most pains.

Parier. *Il y a cent* (or, *gros*) *à parier qu'ils ne reviendront pas* = The odds are that they will not come back.

Paris. *'Il prend Paris pour Corbeil, le Pirée pour un homme'* = 'He does not know a hawk from a handsaw.'

[The French is from La Fontaine, *Fables*, iv. 7, 'Le Singe et le Dauphin', the English from *Hamlet*, ii. 2, where 'handsaw' is a corruption of hernshaw = heron. This was an old proverb, corrupted before Shakespeare's day.

'Pour grain ne prenant paille ou Paris pour Corbeil.'
Régnier, *Sat.* xiv.]

Le Tout-Paris de ce temps-là = The fashionable world of Paris of that day.

Parler. *Nous parlions de la pluie et du beau temps* = We were not talking of anything important or confidential; We were talking of indifferent matters.

Parler de bouche
Au cœur ne touche } = Lip worship does not reach the heart.

C'est à vous à parler = It is your turn to speak.

C'est à vous de parler = It is your duty to speak.

Qu'il vienne, il trouvera à qui parler = Let him come, he will find his match.

Parler. (*cont.*) **Trop gratter cuit, trop parler nuit* = Least said, soonest mended; Speech is silvern, silence is golden.

[Italian: 'Chi parla semina, chi tace raccoglie' = 'Who speaks sows, who keeps silence reaps.'

Qui d'autruy parler voudra
Regarde soi et il taira.
'Il est bon de parler et meilleur de se taire.'—
La Fontaine, *Fables*, viii. 10.]

**Jamais beau parler n'écorcha la langue* = Fair words never did harm; Civility costs nothing.

Il a son franc parler = He is free-spoken.

Parole. **Vous avez la parole* = It is your turn to speak; You are allowed to speak (i.e. you have caught the Speaker's eye). (See *Avoir.*)

Je lui coupai la parole = I interrupted him.

**Un homme d'honneur n'a que sa parole* = An honest man's word is as good as his bond.

Être de parole = To be as good as one's word.

Manquer de parole (or, *manquer à sa parole*) = To break one's word.

Tenir parole = To keep one's word.

Il lui a dit son fait sans mâcher les paroles = He told him quite frankly what he thought of him.

[*Mâcher* = to masticate, hence the phrase means to say something without preparing the hearer for what is about to be said.]

Part. *En bonne ou mauvaise part* = In a good or bad sense.

Nous le savons de bonne part = We know it on good authority.

Partager. *Il est bien partagé* = The Fates have been kind to him.

Parti. *Il a pris son parti* = 1. He has made up his mind. 2. He has resigned himself to it.

De parti pris = Deliberately.

C'est un parti pris = His mind is made up; It is a foregone conclusion.

C'est un parti pris chez lui de toujours contredire = He *will* always contradict.

Parti. (*cont.*)

***À parti pris point de conseil* = Advice is useless when a man's mind is made up.

Il tire parti de tout = He makes a profit out of everything.

Il sait tirer parti de la vie = He knows how to make the best of life.

Il a épousé un bon parti = He made a good match.

Il vous fera un mauvais parti = He will try and pick a quarrel with you so as to ill-use you, to do you harm.

Je vois le bon parti, mais je suis le contraire = I know what is right, but I do not follow it.

['Video meliora, proboque :
Deteriora sequor.'
OVID, *Metamorphoses*, vii. 20.

'Je chéris la vertu, mais j'embrasse le crime.'
VOLTAIRE, *Brutus*, iv. 3.

Compare also Romans vii. 19.]

Partie. *Il m'a pris à partie* = He took me to task ; (legally) He summoned me.

[*Partie* is literally a man who pleads against any one in a law-suit. Compare :

'Va, je suis ta partie et non pas ton bourreau.'
CORNEILLE, *Cid*, 839.]

C'était une partie nulle = It was a drawn game.

C'est une partie remise = It is a pleasure deferred.

Partir. *'Partir c'est mourir un peu'* = 'In every parting there is an image of death.'

[The French is from *Le Rondel de l'Adieu* by Edmond Haraucourt ; the English from George Eliot's *Amos Barton*.]

Pas. *Marcher à pas de géant* = To put on one's seven-league boots ; To walk with great strides.

Se tirer d'un mauvais pas = To get out of an awkward fix (scrape).

**Il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte* = In everything the beginning is the most difficult part ; The first step downward makes the others easier.

[The words are first quoted in this form in a note to Voltaire's *Pucelle d'Orléans* (canto i, l. 205). In a letter to Madame du Deffand he acknowledges that this was one of her *bons mots* when replying to Cardinal de Polignac, who said how wonderful it was for S. Dionysius (or Denis) to have walked with his head

Pas. (*cont.*) under his arm for six miles from Montmartre, the place of his execution, to S. Denis. She replied: 'Monseigneur, il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte.' Gibbon repeats this tale in his *Decline and Fall*, vii. 39.

Compare:

Il n'y a que le premier obstacle qui coûte à vaincre.'

BOSSUET, *Pensées chrétiennes*, 9.]

Il prend le pas sur moi = He takes precedence of me.

J'y vais de ce pas = I am going there directly.

Je le mettrai au pas = I will put him on his good behaviour.

Marquer le pas = (lit.) To mark time; (fig.) To wait for a post to which one has a right.

Marchez au pas = Drive slowly; Walk in step.

Il marche à pas comptés = He walks deliberately (as if counting his steps).

Passe. *Il est en passe de devenir ministre* = He is in a fair way (he stands a good chance) to become a Cabinet Minister.

Passer. *Il faut bien que j'en passe par là* = I must submit to that; I must put up with it.

Nous ne pouvons nous passer de cela = We cannot do without that.

**Passons au déluge* = We know all about that, let us come to the point; Don't let us go over all that again, we will take it for granted.

[RACINE, *Plaideurs*, iii. 3, where L'Intimé, the lawyer, wishes to relate the history of the world from the Creation, and Dandin, the judge, begs him to skip all until the Flood.]

Cette couleur passera = That colour will fade.

**Passe-moi la casse* (*rhubarbe*), *je te passerai le séné* = Claw me and I'll claw thee; One hand washes the other, and both wash the face; You let me have my way and I will let you have yours. (See *Jeu.*)

[The meaning of *passer* here is not the same as in the English 'Pass the salt, please'. It refers to the mutual concessions of two doctors, who prescribe opposite remedies for the same disease: 'You let me give the patient rhubarb, and I'll let you give him senna.'

Compare: MOLIÈRE, *L'Amour medecin*, ii. 4 and iii. 1.]

Passez-moi ce mot-là = Excuse the expression.

Passer. (*cont.*) *J'en passe . . . et des meilleurs* = Some of the best I pass over; To name only a few examples.

[Victor Hugo, *Hernani*, iii. 6.]

Tout passe; tout casse; tout lasse = All is fleeting, all is brittle, all is wearisome; Everything is going to the dogs. (See *Long.*)

On ne passe pas = No thoroughfare.

[*Rue barrée* = Road stopped.]

Pâte. *C'est une bonne pâte d'homme* = He's a good sort (*or*, soul).

Patelin. *Un air patelin* = A sneaking, flattering way.

[*L'Avocat Patelin* is the title of a play by Brueys and Palaprat (1706) founded on a farce of the fifteenth century. (See *Mouton.*) Patelin is the type of the deceitful, flattering humbug.]

Patience. '*Patience et longueur de temps*
Font plus que force ni que rage' =

Time and patience overcome all obstacles; Time works wonders.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, ii. 11.]

Patrie. *Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante* = Devoted to the memory of great men by their grateful country.

[This phrase originated with the Marquis de Pasloret (1756–1840). It is inscribed above the portals of the Panthéon on the Montagne Ste. Geneviève, which contains the ashes of Rousseau, Voltaire, Carnot, Victor Hugo, Zola, and many others.]

Patte. *Vous faites des pattes de mouche* = You have a small, ill-formed handwriting.

Il marche à quatre pattes = He walks on all fours.

Il faut montrer patte blanche = You must show you have a right to enter.

[The wolf in the fable wishing to enter the goat's house has to show a white paw before he can enter.—La Fontaine, *Fables*, iv. 15.]

Pauvre. *Aux pauvres la besace* = The back is made for the burden.

L'homme pauvre est toujours en pays étranger = The poor are never welcomed; All bite the bitten dog.

Pauvreté. **Pauvreté n'est pas vice* = Poverty is no crime.

La pauvreté retarde l'éclosion du mérite = 'Slow rises worth by poverty oppressed.'

[JOHNSON, *Vanity of Human Wishes*, l. 177, a translation of the lines of Juvenal's third satire (ll. 164–5):—

'Haud facile emergunt quorum virtutibus obstat
Res angusta domi.']

Pavé. *Les pavés le disent* = It is in every one's mouth; It is all over the town.

Il est sur le pavé = He is out of work.

Prendre le haut du pavé = To take the wall.

Payer. *Payer de sa personne* = To bravely expose oneself to danger; To risk one's skin.

Être payé pour savoir = To know a thing to one's cost.

Payer d'audace = To put on a bold face; To brazen a thing out.

Payer les violons = To pay the piper.

Je ne me paye pas de mauvaises raisons = I will only be satisfied with good reasons.

Vous vous payez de mots = You are the dupe of words; You are taken in by empty words.

Il me la payera = I will make him smart for it.

Qui paye ses dettes s'enrichit = Debt is the worst kind of poverty.

Payer son écot = To pay one's share (scot).

Il veut se payer ma tête = He wishes to have the laugh of me; He wants to pull my leg.

Pays. *Pays ruiné vaut mieux que pays perdu* = Half a loaf is better than no bread.

Je lui ferai voir du pays = I will lead him a pretty dance; I'll send him on a wild-goose chase.

C'est mon pays (fig.) = He comes from the same place as I do.

Peau. **Il ne faut pas vendre la peau de l'ours avant de*

Peau. (*cont.*) *l'avoir tué* = Do not count your chickens before they are hatched; First catch your hare.

['Il m'a dit qu'il ne faut jamais
Vendre la peau de l'ours qu'on ne l'ait mis par terre.'
LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, v. 20.]

Il crève dans sa peau (fam.) = (lit.) He is extremely fat; (fig.) He is bursting with pride, spite.

Faire peau neuve = To turn over a new leaf.

La peau est plus proche que la chemise = Blood is thicker than water. (See *Chair*.)

Péché. **Péché avoué est à demi pardonné* = A fault confessed is half redressed.

Elle est laide comme les sept péchés capitaux = She is as ugly as sin.

À tout péché miséricorde = Forgive and forget.

Son péché mignon = His besetting sin.

Pécher. *On est souvent puni par où l'on a péché* =

'The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us.'

[*King Lear*, v. 3. Compare *Wisdom* xi. 17.
'Saepe in magistrum scelera redierunt sua.'—SENECA.

'La ruse la mieux ourdie
Peut nuire à son inventeur,
Et souvent la perfidie
Retourne sur son auteur.'
LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, iv. 11.]

Peine. *Cela ne vaut pas la peine* = It is not worth the trouble; It is not worth while.

Mourir à la peine = 1. To die in harness. 2. To work oneself to death.

Toute peine mérite salaire = The labourer is worthy of his hire.

[Also: *Qui a été à la peine doit être à l'honneur.*]

Peinture. *Je ne peux pas le voir même en peinture* = I hate the very sight of that man.

Pelé. *Il y avait quatre pelés et un tondu* = There were only a few people and those of no importance; Only the tag, rag, and bob-tail were there; It was but a one-horse show.

Pelle. **La pelle se moque du fourgon* = It is the pot calling the kettle black.

[Another English variant is: 'The kiln calls the oven: Burnt house.' The Italians say: 'La padella dice al pajuolo: "Fatti di là, che tu me tigni"'=The pan says to the pot, 'Keep off or you'll smutch me.' The Germans: 'Ein Esel schimpft den andern Langohr'=One ass nicknames another Longears.]

Remuer l'argent à la pelle = To have plenty of money.

Pelote. *Il a fait sa pelote* = He has feathered his nest. (See *Botte*.)

Pendant. *Cet homme n'a pas son pendant* (or, *pareil*) = That man has not his match.

Pendre. *Il a dit pis que pendre de vous* = He said everything that was bad of you; According to him, hanging is too good for you.

Qu'il aille se faire pendre ailleurs = Tell him not to bother us any more.

Pensée. *Les pensées ne payent pas d'impôts* = Thought is free.

Penser. *À ce que je pense* = To my mind.

Sans penser à mal = Without meaning any mischief.

Rien que d'y penser j'en ai le frisson = The bare thought of it makes me shudder.

Cela donne furieusement à penser = That is very suggestive.

Sans arrière-pensée = Without reserve; With no after-thought.

Je pense, donc je suis = With man thought proves existence.

['Cogito, ergo sum' are the first words of Descartes' *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison.* They are inscribed on his statue at Tours.

'Vivere est cogitare.'—CICERO, *Tusculanae quaestiones*, v. 38.]

Perdre. **Un de perdu, deux de retrouvés* = When one door shuts, another opens.

Je m'y perds = I am getting bewildered; I cannot make head or tail of it.

Il perd la carte = He is getting confused.

C'est du bien perdu = It is casting pearls before swine.

Perdre. (*cont.*) **Qui perd pèche* = He who loses sins; Nothing succeeds like success.

Perdrix. **Toujours des perdrix* = The best things pall in time.

Perle. *Nous ne sommes pas ici pour enfiler des perles* = We are not here to trifle our time away.

Pérou. *Ce n'est pas le Pérou* (fam.) = It's no great catch; It is not a fortune.

Personne. *C'est la bonté en personne* = He (*or*, She) is kindness itself.

Perte. *À perte de vue* = As far as the eye can reach.

Je suis en perte = I am out of pocket.

J'ai fait cela en pure perte = What I have done is completely useless; All I have done is to no purpose.

Pesant. *Il vaut son pesant d'or* = He is worth his weight in gold.

Peser. *Dépenser mille francs pour un chapeau, cela commence à peser* = To spend £40 on a hat is a serious matter.

Petit. *Elles sont aux petits soins pour leur vieille mère* = They are all attention to their old mother.

**Les petits ruisseaux font les grandes rivières* = Many a little makes a mickle.

**Petit à petit l'oiseau fait son nid* = Little strokes fell great oaks. (See *Maille* and *Ruisseau*.)

[Also: *Grain à grain amasse la fourmi son pain.*
Peu à peu la vieille file sa quenouille.
Italian: 'A passo a passo si va lontano.'
Little and often fills the purse.]

En petit = On a small scale.

**Petit mercier, petit panier* = A small pack becomes a small pedlar.

['Little boats should keep the shore,
Larger ships may venture more.'
Latin: 'Pauper agat caute.']

**Petite cervelle, prompte colère* = A little pot is soon hot.

Pétrin. *Je suis dans le pétrin* (fam.) = I am in a mess, fix.
Les finances sont en ce moment dans un pétrin impossible = The finances are in horrible disorder just now.

Peu. *Si peu que rien* = Next to nothing.
Imaginez un peu! = Just fancy!
Pour peu que cela vous ennuie = However little it annoys you.
Tant soit peu meilleur = Be it ever so little better; A shade better.
À peu de chose près = Not far off.
Peu ou prou = Little or much.

Peur. *Elle était mise à faire peur* = She looked a fright.
Il a eu plus de peur que de mal = He was more frightened than hurt.
Vous m'avez fait une peur bleue = You gave me an awful fright.

Phrase. *Faire des phrases* = To speak affectedly.

Pie. **Il a trouvé la pie au nid* = He has found a mare's nest.
Elle jase comme une pie borgne = She chatters like a magpie; She talks nineteen to the dozen.
Bavard comme une pie = A regular chatterbox.

Pièce. *J'ai fait cela de toutes pièces* = I have done that entirely (i. e. every part of it).
Je lui ai donné la pièce = I gave him a trifle, tip.
C'est la pièce de résistance = It is the principal dish (of a meal).

Pied. *Il a bon pied, bon œil* = He is hale and hearty.
Sur le pied où en sont les choses = Considering how matters stand.
Sur ce pied-là je perds = At that rate I am a loser.
**Il ne sait sur quel pied danser* = He does not know which way to turn.

Pied. (*cont.*)

Partir du bon pied = To put one's best foot foremost.

Je ferai des pieds et des mains pour vous être utile = I will do my utmost (strain every nerve) to serve you.

Armé de pied en cap = Armed from head to foot, cap-a-pie.

Le pied m'a manqué = My foot slipped.

Mettre (*quelqu'un*) *à pied* = (fam.) To dismiss (a functionary); To deprive a cabman of his licence.

Il a trouvé chaussure à son pied = He has found just what he wanted; He has found his match.

Lâcher pied = 1. To lose ground. 2. To scamper away.

Lever le pied = To decamp (of a dishonest banker, &c.).

Vous m'avez tiré une épine du pied = (fig.) You have got me out of a difficulty; You have taken a weight off my mind. (See *Épine*.)

J'ai fait mon travail d'arrache-pied = I did my work straight off, without stopping, at one stretch.

De plain pied = On the same level (of rooms on the same floor, or on a level with the ground).

Il a le pied marin = He has got his sea-legs; He is a good sailor.

Sauter à pieds joints sur quelqu'un = (fig.) To ride rough-shod over any one.

Il ne se mouche pas du pied (pop.) = 1. He is a man of importance; He gives himself airs. 2. He is no fool.

[A favourite trick of a tumbler in olden times was to take one of his feet in his hands and pass it quickly under his nose. Hence the expression would be equivalent to: he is no tumbler or common fellow. 'N'est pas un homme, non, qui se mouche du pied.'—Molière, *Tartufe*, iv. 5.]

J'ai les pieds et les poings liés = It is absolutely impossible for me to do anything; I am tied hand and foot.

Il a obéi à cet ordre au pied de la lettre = He carried out that order literally (without thinking or reasoning).

Haut le pied! = Be off with you!

Pied. (*cont.*)

Des pieds à dormir debout = Beetle-crushers (i. e. very big feet).

Aller du pied (or, *Courir*) *comme un chat maigre* = To be a good walker.

Il sèche sur pied = He is pining away.

La mort l'a pris au pied levé = Death took him without a moment's notice.

[Literally, just at the moment he was starting to go out.

'Est-il juste qu'on meure au pied levé?'

LA FONTAINE, *Fables*, viii. 1.]

Pierre.

**Faire d'une pierre deux coups* = To kill two birds with one stone.

**Pierre qui roule n'amasse pas mousse* = A rolling stone gathers no moss.

[The Greek form was: "*λίθος κυλινδόμενος τὸ φῦκος οὐ ποιεῖ*;" the rhyming Latin: 'Non fit hirsutus lapis hinc atque inde volutus.'

'Rarement à courir le monde
On revient homme de bien.'

RÉGNIER-DESMARAIS, *Le Voyage de Munik*.]

Cela ferait rire un tas de pierres = That would make a cat laugh.

Il a jeté une pierre dans votre jardin = That was a dig at you.

Il est malheureux comme les pierres = He is as wretched as can be.

Piété.

Sa montre est au mont-de-piété = His watch is at the pawnbroker's. (See *Accrocher*.)

[The Mont de Piété is so called from the Monte di Pietà (lit. the collection of pious offerings) at Padua. This was a loan office founded by Bernardino da Feltre, a monk who wished to deliver his fellow-townsmen from the hands of usurers. He collected a fund for lending to the poor at a very low rate of interest.]

Pignon.

Avoir pignon sur rue = To have a house of one's own.

Pile.

Jouer à pile ou face = To play pitch and toss, heads or tails.

Il n'a ni croix ni pile = He has not a rap.

['Sans croix ni pile.'—LA FONTAINE, *Contes*, ii. 'Whacum had neither cross nor pile.'—BUTLER, *Hudibras*, ii. 3. *Pile* is literally the reverse of a coin because many had a pillar on that side, whereas a cross or face was on the obverse.]

Pilier. *C'est un pilier d'estaminet* (or, *de café*) = He is a public-house lounger, a pub loafer.

Pilule. *Dorer la pilule* = To gild the pill.

['Le seigneur Jupiter sait dorer la pilule.'
MOLIÈRE, *Amphitryon*, iii. 11.]

Pipe. *Casser sa pipe* (pop.) = To kick the bucket; To hop the twig; To die.

Piquer. *Piquer la curiosité de quelqu'un* = To rouse some one's curiosity.

Il se pique d'un rien = He takes offence at the slightest thing.

Il s'est piqué d'honneur = He made it a point of honour; He was put upon his mettle.

Piquer des deux = (lit.) To spur a horse with both heels; To gallop off at full speed; (fig.) To run very fast.

Piquer une tête (fam.) = To take a header.

Voilà un discours qui n'est pas piqué des vers = That's a fine speech if you like [lit. not worm-eaten].

Se piquer au jeu = (lit.) To continue obstinately to play although losing; (fig.) To go on in an enterprise in spite of all obstacles.

Piquer un soleil (fam.) = To colour up, to blush.

Pivert. *Le pivert se perd par son bec* = The tongue talks at the head's cost.

Place. **Qui va à la chasse perd sa place* = If you leave your place, you lose it.

Plaider. '*Accordez-vous si votre affaire est bonne,*
Si votre cause est mauvaise, plaidez.'
If you've a good case, try and compromise;
If you've a bad one, take it into court.
[J. B. ROUSSEAU, *Épigrammes*, ii. 19.]

Plaie. *Il ne demande que plaie et bosse* = He seeks quarrels only to draw profit from them.

Il ne cherche que plaie et bosse = He is always hankering after a black eye.

Plaisanterie. *Une bonne plaisanterie mérite les honneurs du bis* = A good tale is none the worse for being told twice.

Plaisir. *Il le fera à son bon plaisir* = He will do it at his own sweet will.

Plan. *Reléguer* (*mettre*) *au second plan* = To put into the background.

Planche. *Faire la planche* = 1. To show others the way. 2. To float on one's back.

C'est sa planche de salut = It is his last hope, his sheet-anchor.

Plancher. *Le plancher des vaches* (fam.) = Dry land; *Terra firma.*

Débarrasse-moi le plancher (fam.) = Get out of my way.

Planter. *Vous m'avez planté là* = You left me without any warning; You left me in the lurch.

Plat. *Il nous a servi un plat de son métier* (or, *de sa façon*) = He played us one of his tricks; He gave us a specimen of his skill.

On mit les petits plats dans les grands pour le bien recevoir (fam.) = They spared neither trouble nor money to receive him well; They received him with much fuss; They killed the fatted calf for him.

Il a mis les pieds dans le plat (fam.) = He put his foot in it.

[Also: *Il a fait une gaffe, une bévue.*]

Plâtre. *Ce mari bat sa femme comme plâtre* = That husband beats his wife like a dog.

Essuyer les plâtres = To live in a newly-built house (and therefore damp). (See *Essuyer.*)

Plein. *Battre son plein* = To be in full swing; To be at its height.

Plein comme un œuf (fam.) = Chock-full.

En pleine rue = In the open street.

En pleine mer = On the high seas.

Il en avait plein la bouche = He was always talking of it.

Plein. (*cont.*) *Il était plein comme une outre* = He was as tight as a drum (i. e. drunk).

Pleurer. *La niaise! pleurer à chaudes larmes pour une vétille* = The silly girl! to cry her eyes out for a trifle.

Pleurer comme une Madeleine, comme un veau = To cry abundantly.

Pleuvoir. *Pleuvoir des hallebardes* (or, *des rasoirs*) = To rain cats, dogs, and pitchforks.

Pli. *Cela ne fera pas un pli* = There will not be the slightest difficulty.

Si vous n'y prenez (pas) garde, il prendra un mauvais pli = If you are not careful he will get into bad habits.

Je connais les plis et les replis de son esprit = I know the inmost recesses of his mind. (See *Coin.*)

Pluie. **Après la pluie le beau temps* = Every cloud has a silver lining.

[Also: *Dans toute chose il y a un bon côté.*]

Nous parlions de la pluie et du beau temps = We were talking of indifferent matters.

Il fait la pluie et le beau temps dans cette maison = His will is law in that house; He is the boss of that show (fam.).

[This originated with the authority that certain astrologers secured over the credulous, who thought that even the weather depended on them.]

Plus. **Plus on a, plus on veut avoir* = Much would have more.

Poche. *Il connaît Paris comme sa poche* = He knows Paris perfectly; He knows all the ins and outs of Paris; His knowledge of Paris is extensive and peculiar.

Poésie. '*La poésie n'a jamais su exprimer le bonheur comme elle exprime la douleur*' =

'Most wretched men
Are cradled into poetry by wrong;
They learn in suffering what they teach in song.'

[The French is by Lamartine (*Nouvelles Méditations*), the English comes from Shelley's *Julian and Maddalo* (l. 453).
Also: *Qui sait pleurer sait chanter.*]

Poil. *Un brave à trois poils* (fam.) = The bravest of the brave; A hero of the first water; A man who does not know what fear is.

[This expression is derived from three-piled velvet. See MOLIÈRE, *Les Précieuses ridicules*, 12.]

Monter à poil = To ride bare-backed.

Il est au poil et à la plume = He is as fit as a fiddle.

Point. **Un point à temps en épargne cent* = A stitch in time saves nine.

[Spanish: 'Quien no adoba gotera adoba casa entera' = Who repairs not his gutter repairs his whole house.
German: 'Ein Wort zur rechten Zeit erspart hundert andere.']

Cela vient à point = That comes opportunely.

La viande est cuite à point = The meat is done to a turn.

Vous venez à point nommé = You come in the nick of time, at the necessary moment, just when you are wanted.

Mettez les points sur les i = Be precise, clear (in speaking or writing); Cross your t's and dot your i's.

Il vous rendrait des points = He is more than a match for you; He could give you points.

Il vous rendra des points = He will give you odds (at a game).

Il y a un point noir à l'horizon = There are breakers ahead.

Un point—c'est tout = There's an end of it.

Au point où en sont les choses = As matters stand.

Poire. **Coupons la poire en deux* = Let us split the difference.

Elle faisait trop sa poire (pop.) = She needed pressing; She played the prude (*or*, disdainful).

['Il était trop homme pour faire sa poire.']

Nous en causerons entre la poire et le fromage = We will talk it over at dessert, over the walnuts and the wine.

Garder une poire pour la soif = To lay up something for a rainy day.

Poire. (*cont.*) *Il ne faut pas me prendre pour une poire* (pop.) = You must not think me a mug (*or*, a juggins); You won't see any green in my eye.

[This use of the word *poire* originated with the caricatures of Louis-Philippe, whose head was often represented as a pear.]

Poisson. *On lui a fait un poisson d'avril* = They made him an April fool.

[*Donner à quelqu'un un poisson d'avril* is the more usual expression, which is said to have originated in the time of Charles IX, when the beginning of the year was altered from April to January (1564). People began to give presents on January 1 instead of on April 1; and then when April came they gave mock presents, such as an imitation fish.]

Je suis comme un poisson sur la paille = I am like a fish out of water.

Poisson sans boisson est poison = Fish must swim thrice.

Finir en queue de poisson = To end in nothing. (See *Aboutir* and *Eau*.)

Polichinelle. *C'est le secret de Polichinelle* = It is an open secret; Every one knows it.

Il a avalé la pratique de Polichinelle = He is very hoarse.

[*La pratique de Polichinelle* is the squeaker that a Punch-and-Judy man puts in his mouth during a performance.]

Politesse. **Force politesse, trop de finesse* = Full of courtesy, full of craft.

Pomme. *Une pomme de discorde* = A bone of contention.

Pont. *Il se porte comme le Pont-Neuf* = He is in splendid health.

C'est vieux comme le Pont-Neuf = Queen Anne is dead; It is as old as the hills.

[The Pont-Neuf was finished in 1604 during the reign of Henry IV, and is now the oldest bridge in Paris. The statue of Henry IV in the middle of the bridge was erected originally in 1635, but the present one dates only from 1818.

Another expression is:
Henri Quatre est sur le Pont-Neuf = That's stale news.]

La foire n'est pas sur le pont = There is plenty of time.

Pontoise. *Il a l'air de revenir de Pontoise* = He looks down in the mouth; He answers in a silly fashion.

[The origin of this expression is said to be that in 1720 and in 1753 the Parlement was exiled to Pontoise, about twenty miles north of Paris, for its rebellion against the King. Perhaps from the fact that when they returned they were besieged with questions, to which they gave confused answers, the saying arose and was applied to any one that had a simple, idiotic appearance.]

Porte. *Ils ont mis la clef sous la porte* = They absconded.

Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée = You must decide one way or the other.

[The title of one of Alfred de Musset's Proverbes, borrowed from a line in Brueys and Palaprat's *Grondeur*, i. 6.
Latin: 'Oportet testitudinis carnes aut edere aut non edere.']

On l'a mis à la porte = They turned him out.

Il a été mis à la porte par les oreilles et les deux épaules = He was turned out ignominiously, neck and crop.

On a condamné la porte = The door is nailed up, blocked up.

Hardiment heurte à la porte qui bonne nouvelle apporte = Bearers of good news are not afraid of their welcome.

Portée. *À sa portée* (or, *à portée de sa main*) = Within his reach.

À (la) portée de la voix = Within call.

À (une) portée de fusil = Within gunshot.

Porter. *C'est elle qui porte la culotte* = She is mistress in this house (not her husband); The grey mare is the better horse.

On le porte aux nues = They praise him to the skies.

Ses plaisanteries portent coup = His jokes hit the mark.

Portion. *Mettre quelqu'un à la portion congrue* = To give some one enough to live on and no more.

[During the *ancien regime* the Church was entitled to a tithe or tenth part of the crops of a parish. But these tithes were often collected by laymen—*courtiers* or tax-farmers—who would keep the greater part and hand over to the priest just enough to keep body and soul together.]

Poser. *Allez-vous me faire poser comme cela longtemps ?* = How long are you going to mystify me like that ?

Posons le cas que cela soit = Let us admit (suppose) that it is so.

Poseur. *C'est un poseur* = He is a snobbish prig (lit attitudinizer).

[There are several varieties of prigs, e.g.—
un savantasse = a learned prig.
un collet monté = a stiff-as-starch prig.
un cafard = a Pecksniff.
un fat = a conceited ass.
un freluquet = a whipper-snapper.
See *Journal of Education*, March 1896.]

Possession. **En fait de meubles possession vaut titre* = Possession is nine points of the law.

Possible. *Pas possible !* = You don't say so ! 'Well, I never !'

Pot. *Il découvrit bientôt le pot aux roses* = He soon found out the secret.

**Un pot fêlé dure longtemps* = A creaking door hangs long ; Ailing folk live longest.

**Il n'y a si méchant pot qui ne trouve son couvercle* = Every Jack must have his Jill.

[Also : *À chacun sa chacune.* (See *Boiteux.*)]

Il a reçu un pot-de-vin = He received a bribe, an illicit commission.

[A *pot-de-vin* is a gratuity given to B by A because B obtained for A an order from C. It implies the idea of a bribe, for if everything had been fair A would not have obtained his order from C, either because his terms were too high or his wares not good enough.]

Dans les vieux pots on fait de la bonne soupe = Old people are by no means as foolish as young ones think them ; There is many a good tune played on an old fiddle.

On reconnaît aux tessons ce que furent les pots = By their remains you can tell how great they were.

Payer les pots cassés = To stand the racket ; To pay the damage ; To face the music.

Tourner autour du pot = To beat about the bush.

Pot. (*cont.*) *C'est le pot de terre contre le pot de fer* = It is a most unequal combat; It is the weak against the strong.

Potage. *Pour tout potage il ne trouva qu'un chou* = All he found was a cabbage.

['Il a pris aujourd'hui pour renfort de potage un maître de philosophie' = To crown all he has engaged to-day a teacher of philosophy. MOLIÈRE, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, iii. 3.]

Potasser. *Je vais potasser* (*piocher*) *un brin* (students' slang) = I'm going to swot (mug up) a bit.

Potin. *Faire du potin* (*chambard, boucan*) (pop.) = To kick up a row, a shindy.

[Also: *Faire bacchanal.*]

Pouce. *Manger sur le pouce* = To take a snack.

Mettre les pouces = To give in, to knuckle under.

Lire du pouce (or, *doigt*) = To skip in reading (i. e. to do more work with the thumb than the brain); To read carelessly.

Poudre. *Il n'a pas inventé la poudre* = He will never set the Thames on fire.

[It has been contended by Dr. Brewer and others that Thames should be written temse (= corn-sieve), which could be set on fire by a man turning it energetically. However ingenious this correction may seem, it is unfortunate that this spelling has never been found and there is no evidence to support it. On the other hand there is the German saying: 'Er hat den Rhein und das Meer angezündet.']

Poule. *C'est une poule mouillée* = He is a milk-sop.

Quand les poules auront des dents = When pigs can fly.

Tuer la poule aux œufs d'or = To kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Pour. *Il partira pour un oui, pour un non* = He will leave on the slightest provocation, for the merest trifle.

Pourpoint. *Mettre un homme en pourpoint* = To pull a man's cloak off; To ruin a man.

Se mettre en pourpoint = To be ready to fight; To roll up one's sleeves.

Tirer un coup (*de pistolet, &c.*) *à brûle-pourpoint* = To fire point-blank.

Pourpoint. (*cont.*) *Un argument à brûle-pourpoint* = A convincing argument.

Donner à quelqu'un un pourpoint de pierre = To give any one a stone doublet; To imprison any one.

Pouvoir. *Je n'y puis rien* = I cannot help it; I can do nothing in the matter.

Si faire se peut = If possible.

Je n'en puis plus = I am done up, exhausted, dead beat.

Je n'en puis mais = I cannot help it; It is no fault of mine. (See *Mais.*)

Cela se peut = That may be.

Cela ne se peut pas = It cannot possibly be; It cannot be done.

On fait comme on peut = We must do the best we can; We have done the best we could.

Il est toujours on ne peut plus aimable = He is always as nice as can be.

Prêcher. *Il prêche dans le désert* = (lit.) He preaches to empty benches; (fig.) All his talking will not convince any one.

Chacun prêche pour son saint = Every one has an eye to his own interest.

Premier. *Nous sommes au premier* = We are on the first floor.

Nous sommes en première = We are in a first-class railway carriage.

Le premier venu (fig.) = Anyone, no matter who (*or*, whom); The man in the street.

**Les premiers vont devant* = First come, first served.

[Also: *Aux tard venus les os; Premier venu, premier moulu; Le premier venu engrène.*

'Whoso first cometh to the mill, first grint.'—CHAUCER.]

Prendre. *Il prend sur son sommeil pour étudier* = He studies far into the night.

C'est autant de pris sur l'ennemi = So much saved out of the fire; So much to the good.

Bien lui en prit d'avoir fermé sa porte = It was lucky for him that he had shut his door.

Prendre. (*cont.*) *Il prend le chemin de l'hôpital* = He is on the highway to ruin.

Je m'en prends à vous = I lay the blame at your door.

Prenez-vous-en à vous-même = You have yourself to thank for it.

Que je vous y prenne! = Let me catch you at it!

Ça ne prend pas (fam.) = 'That's no go.'

Je sors d'en prendre (fam.) = I had rather be excused; You will not catch me again so soon.

Qu'est-ce qui vous prend? = What is the matter with you? What's up now?

[This is said to persons doing something suddenly without any apparent reason, or suddenly becoming bad-tempered, sulky, &c., not to invalids.]

Je vais vous montrer comment il faut s'y prendre = I am going to show you how to set about it.

**Ce qui est bon à prendre est bon à garder* = What is worth taking is worth keeping; 'Findings, keepings.'

À tout prendre = On the whole; Everything considered.

Près. *À cela près il est bon enfant* = Except for that he is a good fellow.

Presse. *Il n'y a pas presse* = There is no hurry!

[Also: *Cela ne presse pas.*]

**Plus on se presse, moins on arrive* = The more haste, the less speed. (See *Hâte.*)

Fendre la presse = To make one's way through the crowd.

Pretentaine. *Courir la pretentaine* = To gad about.

Prêter. *Il prête de l'argent à la petite semaine* = He lends money for a short time at a high rate of interest.

Un prêté rendu = A Roland for an Oliver; Tit for tat.

[This is often incorrectly given as *un prête pour un rendu.*]

Prêter le flanc à . . . = To lay oneself open to . . .

Prêter serment = To take the oath.

Prêter. (*cont.*) *Ce drap prête* = This stuff gives, stretches.

On ne prête qu'aux riches = Rich people can always obtain a loan.

Prévenir. *Prévenir est mieux que guérir* = Prevention is better than cure.

[Also : *Mieux vaut soigner sa santé que sa maladie.*]

Primer. *Elle prime par sa laideur* = She takes the cake for ugliness.

Princesse. *Aux frais de la Princesse* = At another's expense (chiefly at the expense of the State).

Prise. *Ils étaient aux prises* = They had closed ; They were at close quarters, at grips.

Je les ai mis aux prises = I have set them one against the other.

Je leur ai donné prise sur moi = I gave them a hold on me.

Lâcher prise = To let go one's hold.

Prison. *Il n'y a pas de belle prison* = The worst lodging is better than the finest prison ; Liberty is man's first need.

Procès. *Sans autre forme de procès* = Without any more ado.

Promener. *Je l'ai envoyé promener* (or, *paître*) = I sent him about his business, to the right about ; I sent him packing.

Va te promener! (fam.) = Go to Jericho ! Get along with you !

[Compare : "Βάλλ' εἰς μακαρίαν" = Go to—Glory.
Plato, *Hipp. Major*, 293 A.]

Et puis tout à coup, va te promener! = Then suddenly the whole affair fell through.

Promettre. **Chose promise, chose due* = Promises should be kept.

Promettre et tenir sont (or, *font*) *deux* = It is one thing to promise, another to perform.

Propos. *Il est venu fort à propos* = He came very opportunely.

À propos, viendrez-vous ce soir ? = By the way, will you come this evening ?

Propos. (*cont.*) *L'à-propos fait le mérite* = Seasonableness gives everything its price.

À propos de bottes = With reference to nothing in particular; With no reference to the subject in hand.

Il le dit à tout propos = He says it on every occasion, at every turn. (See *Bout.*)

Il l'a fait de propos délibéré = He did it of set purpose; He had made up his mind to do it.

Il l'a fait fort mal à propos = He did it very unseasonably, just at the wrong time.

Propre. *C'est du propre* (ironic.) = A fine thing indeed; It is shameful.

Il n'a rien en propre = He has nothing of his own.

Un propre-à-rien = A good-for-naught.

Propre à tout et bon à rien = Jack of all trades and master of none.

Propre comme un sou neuf = As clean as a whistle; As neat as a new pin.

Le voilà propre! = Now he is in a pretty mess. (See *Beau.*)

Propriété. *Une nue propriété* = A property with which one can do as one likes.

Prune. *Je ne le ferai pas pour des prunes* (fam.) = I shall not do it for nothing.

[The *prune* is not here a plum but the fruit of the *prunellier* or wild sloe-tree whose berries were of no value. Also: *Je ne le ferai pas pour le roi de Prusse.* This latter saying is found in a libellous song, issued after the Seven Years' War, against Madame de Pompadour, and it cannot have originated with Voltaire, who, after having been exceedingly intimate with Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, finally quarrelled with him. Both this king and his father, Frederick William I, were known to be exacting and miserly, as they had to be, seeing the difficulties of their reigns.]

Puce. *Je lui ai mis la puce à l'oreille* = I made him feel uneasy (by rousing his suspicions, &c.); I sent him away with a flea in his ear.

Puits. *Cet homme est un puits de science* = He is a man of deep learning.

Punition. *La punition boite, mais elle arrive* = God's mill grinds slow but sure ; God is a creditor who has no bad debts.

['Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.'—LONGFELLOW, translation of Friedrich von Logau's *Sinngedichte* (1604–55). The first rendering is from George Herbert's *Iacula Prudentium* (1651). The idea is said to be of Eastern origin and to be first found in Sextus Empiricus (*circa* A. D. 200) : "*ὀψὲ θεῶν ἀλέουσι μύλοι, ἀλέουσι δὲ λεπτά.*"

Compare : TIBULLUS, *Elegies*, i. 9. 3., and

'Raro antecedentem scelestum
Deseruit pede Poena claudo.'
HORACE, *Odes*, iii. 2. 32.

"*ὁρμᾶται μολῖς, ἀλλ' ὅμως*
πιστόν τι τὸ θεῖον
σθένος."
EURIPIDES, *Bacchae* 882.

= Slowly but surely withal the might of heaven advances.]

Q.

Quand. *Je le ferai quand même* = I shall do it just the same ; I shall do it, whatever it may cost.

Quant. *Se tenir sur son quant-à-soi* = To stand on one's dignity.

Quart. *Le quart d'heure de Rabelais* = The moment of payment. (See *Heure.*)

Passer un mauvais quart d'heure = To have a bad time of it.

Quatorze. *Avoir quinte et quatorze* = To have the game in one's own hand.

[This phrase refers to terms used in the game of piquet. *Quinte* is to have five cards of the same colour, which counts fifteen. *Quatorze* is to have four cards of the same value (i. e. four knaves, aces, &c.), and counts fourteen.]

Quatre. *Il se mettrait en quatre pour un ami* = He would go through fire and water for a friend.

Faire le diable à quatre = To kick up a terrible noise ; To exert oneself to the utmost.

[This expression originated in the time of the miracle plays, when four performers represented *la grande diablerie*, and less than four *la petite diablerie.*]

Quatre. (*cont.*) *Il lui a dit ses vérités entre quatre yeux* = He told him what he thought of him to his face in private.

[Note that *entre quatre yeux* is pronounced familiarly *entre quatre-z-yeux.*]

On le tenait à quatre = It needed four men to hold him down.

Il se tenait à quatre pour ne pas lui dire des injures = It was as much as he could do not to abuse him.

Travailler comme quatre = To work like a nigger.

Que. **Ce que c'est que la vie!* = What a strange thing life is! What poor mortals we are! (See *Ce.*)

Ses louanges ne laissent pas que de me faire plaisir = I cannot help feeling pleased at his compliments.

Quelconque. *La pièce n'est que quelconque* = The piece (i.e. the play) is quite an ordinary one.

Quenouille. *C'est une famille où l'esprit est tombé en quenouille* = In that family only the women are clever; In that family the brains are on the distaff side.

Querelle. *N'épousez pas sa querelle* = Do not take up his quarrel.

Ils veulent vider leur querelle = They want to fight it out.

Quérir. *Il serait bon à aller quérir la mort* = He is very slow.

Question. *Mettre en question* = To call in question; To doubt.

Mettre à la question = To put to the torture.

Vous sortez de la question = You do not stick to the point.

Qu'il n'en soit plus question = Do not bother me about it any more; Let bygones be bygones. (See *Oublier.*)

Queue. *J'ai fait queue au théâtre pendant une heure* = I waited outside the theatre for an hour (before I could get in).

On fait queue au théâtre = There is a crowd at the door of the theatre (waiting for admittance).

**À la queue gît le venin* = The sting is in the tail.

Queue. (*cont.*)

Aller à la queue-leu-leu = To go in Indian file.

[*Leu* was the old French form of *loup*, so the phrase means to walk as wolves do, one after the other.]

Tenir la queue de la poêle = To be the leading spirit in an affair.

Qui.

Pour qui connaît = To any one who knows.

Ils s'échappèrent qui par la porte, qui par les fenêtres = Some escaped through the door, others through the windows.

**Qui s'excuse s'accuse* = A guilty conscience needs no accuser.

C'est à qui le fera = They all wish to do it; They vie with one another to do it. (See *Mieux.*)

Quia.

Être réduit à quia = To be reduced to 'because . . .'; To be nonplussed.

Quitte.

Me voilà quitte envers lui = I owe him nothing now.

Vous en êtes quitte à bon marché = You come off cheap.

J'en ai été quitte pour la peur = I escaped with a good fright.

J'irai, quitte à être grondé = I shall go, even if I am scolded; I shall go, and chance the scolding.

Quoi.

J'ai de quoi payer = I have enough to pay.

Il n'y a pas là de quoi pleurer = It is not worth crying about.

Il n'y a pas de quoi rire = It is no laughing matter.

Il n'y a pas de quoi (fam.) = Pray don't mention it; There is no necessity to apologize. (See *Avoir.*)

De quoi vous mêlez-vous? = What business is that of yours?

Un je ne sais quoi = A 'something' (I know not what).

[*Elle avait je ne sais quoi de charmant* = She had a vague, indefinable charm.]

C'est un filou, quoi! (pop.) = In a word, he's a scamp; He's a scamp, that's what he is.

R.

Rabais. *Vente au rabais* = Sale at reduced prices; 'Selling off.'

Rabattre. *Rabattre le caquet à quelqu'un* (pop.) = To take a person down a peg; To stop his jaw; To cut his cackle.

Radis. *Il n'a pas un radis* (fam.) = He has not a brass farthing (See *Liard.*)

Raide. *C'est un peu raide* = That is coming it rather strong.
Il se tient raide comme un pieu = He looks as if he had a poker up his back.

Raillerie. *Cela passe la raillerie* = That is beyond a joke. (See *Entendre.*)

Raison. *Il n'entend pas raison là-dessus* = He will not listen to reason on that point.
Se faire raison à soi-même = To take the law into one's own hands.
Comme de raison = Rightly enough; As might be expected.
Plus que de raison = More than is reasonable.
Raison de plus = All the more reason.
Avoir des raisons avec quelqu'un = To have words with any one; To quarrel with any one.
Il faut se faire une raison = We must be guided by reason; We must look at things from a reasonable point of view.
[E. g. not go on worrying after a great loss.]
Donner raison à quelqu'un = To say any one is right; To give satisfaction to any one (either legally or by a duel).
'*Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas*' = Sentiment and logic are not identical.
[Pascal, *Pensées*, ii. 17. 5.]

Rancart. *On l'a mis au rancart* = He has been put on the shelf.
[Also: *Il est sous la remise.*]

Rang. **'Tel brille au second rang qui s'éclipse au premier'* = A good subordinate often makes a bad leader.
[Voltaire, *Henriade*, i. 31.]

Ranger. *Il s'est rangé* = He has settled down (after sowing his wild oats).

Rare. *Vous devenez bien rare* = You are quite a stranger.

Raseur. *C'est un raseur* (fam.) = He is a bore.
[*Une bassinoire* = a passive bore.
Also: *Il est assommant.*]

Rat. *Il est gueux comme un rat d'église* = He is as poor as a church mouse.

Rate. *Il ne se foule pas la rate* (pop.) = He does not overwork himself; He takes things easily.
[Also: *Il ne se foule pas le poignet.*]
Cela lui désopilera la rate (fam.) = That will cheer him up.

Râtelier. *Il mange à plus d'un râtelier* = He has more than one string to his bow; He gains money from different sources.

Rattraper. **Bien fin qui me rattrapera* = Once bit, twice shy; They won't catch me doing that again.

Rebours. *Il prend les choses à rebours* = He misconstrues everything.

Rebrousse. *À rebrousse-poil* = Against the grain; (To rub) the wrong way.

Reconnaître. *Je vous reconnais bien là* = That is just like you.
Je ne m'y reconnais plus = I don't know where I am, what I am about; I am quite at sea.

Reculer. *Il a reculé pour mieux sauter* = 1. He waited for something better; He stooped to conquer. 2. (ironic.) He avoided a small evil to fall into a greater.
[Compare: *Mieux reculer que mal assaillir.*]
Marcher à reculons = To walk backwards.

Redire. *Il trouve toujours à redire* = He is always finding fault.

Redire. (*cont.*) *Il n'y a rien à redire à cela* = There is no fault to be found with that; That is quite all right.

Il n'est rien de si bien fait où l'on ne trouve à redire = One can pick holes in anything, however well done.

Réflexion. *Réflexion faite* = After due reflection; On second thoughts.

Refrain. *C'est le refrain de la ballade* = It is the old story over again.

['C'est toujours le refrain qu'ils font à leur ballade.'
RÉGNIER, *Sat.* i.]

Refus. *Cela n'est pas de refus* (fam.) = That is very acceptable; I won't say no to that.

Refuser. **Qui refuse muse* =

'He that will not when he may,
When he would he shall have nay.'

[HEYWOOD, *Proverbs*, iii.]

Regard. *Il lançait des regards foudroyants* = He looked as black as thunder.

Regarder. *N'y regardez pas de si près* = Do not be so particular; Look on it with an indulgent eye.

Cela ne me regarde pas = That is not my business; That does not concern me.

J'y regarderai à deux fois = I shall think twice before doing it.

Il est regardant comme pas un = He looks at every penny he spends; He is terribly mean.

Régime. *L'ancien régime* = The old order of things; The government of France before 1789.

Régler. *Il est réglé comme un papier de musique* = He is as regular as clockwork.

Rein. *Nous poursuivîmes l'ennemi l'épée dans les reins* = We followed the enemy close at his heels.

Il s'est donné un tour de reins = He sprained his back.

Il a les reins solides = (lit.) He is strong; (fig.) He has a long purse.

Réjouir. *C'est un gros réjoui* = He is a big, jolly fellow.

Remède. **À chose faite point de remède* = What is done cannot be undone.

['Factum est illud: fieri infectum non potest.'
PLAUTUS, *Aul.* iv. x. 15.]

Remontrer. *Gros Jean qui en remontre à son curé* = Hodge tries to teach the parson how to preach; He teaches his grandmother to suck eggs. (See *Apprendre.*)

Remporter. *Il a remporté la victoire* = He carried the day.

Renard. **Renard qui dort la matinée*
N'a pas la gueule emplumée =
'Tis the early bird that catches the worm. (See *Lever.*)

C'est le renard qui prêche aux poules = It is Satan reproving sin.

Renchérir. *Il renchérit sur tout ce qu'il entend dire* = He caps every story he hears told.

Rencontrer. *Les beaux esprits se rencontrent* = Great wits jump together.

[When two persons happen to say the same thing at the same time.]

Rengaine. *C'est toujours la même rengaine* (or, *guitare*) (fam.) = It is always the same old story.

Renommée. **Bonne renommée vaut mieux que ceinture dorée* = A good name is better than riches. (See *Ceinture.*)

Répandre. *C'est un homme très répandu* = He is a man who goes into society a great deal.

Repentir. **Le repentir vient ordinairement trop tard* = Do a thing in haste and repent at leisure.

Répondre. *Je vous en réponds!* = I will be bound it is; I should think so, indeed; You take my word for it.

Reprise. *J'ai appelé mon domestique à plusieurs reprises* = I called my servant several times.

Reprocher. *Il me reproche les morceaux* = He grudges me the very food I eat.

Résoudre. *Je ne puis m'y résoudre* = I cannot make up my mind to do it.

Ressort. *Ce n'est pas de mon ressort* = That is not within my province, 'not in my line'.

Il a fait jouer tous les ressorts = He used all the means in his power.

Ce tribunal juge en dernier ressort = This court tries without appeal; There is no appeal from the findings of this court.

Reste. *Je ne veux pas être en reste avec vous* = I do not want to do less for you than you have done for me.

J'en ai de reste = I have more than enough.

Il n'a pas demandé son reste! = He soon took himself off, I can tell you! He soon shut up, take it from me!

[*Demander son reste* = to ask for what is still due to one. If what is due is nothing but blows, one does not ask for them.]

Il y allait de son reste dans cette affaire = In that matter it was neck or nothing with him.

Retour. *Il est perdu sans retour* = He is past all hope.

Il demeure à l'étranger sans esprit de retour = He is living abroad without thinking of returning; He has settled abroad for good.

Il me paie de retour = He loves (*or*, hates) me as much as I love (*or*, hate) him.

[E. g. *Vous dites que vous aimez votre mère, mais elle vous paie bien de retour.*]

Retourner. *Je sais de quoi il retourne* = I know how matters stand.

N'y retournez pas = Don't do that again. (See *Revenir.*)

Retraite. *Battre la retraite* = To beat tattoo (*or*, the retreat).

Battre en retraite = To retreat.

Retrouver. *Je le retrouverai bien* = He will not escape me.

Revendre. *Avoir d'une chose à revendre* = To have more than enough of a thing.

Revenir. **Revenons à nos moutons* = But to return to our subject. (See *Mouton.*)

Revenir. (*cont.*) *Vous en revenez toujours là* = You are always harping on that string.

Je n'en reviens pas = I cannot get over it (astonishment).

[Or, pop. *j'en suis baba.*]

N'y revenez pas = (lit.) Do not come here again; (fig.) Do not do that again.

Cela revient à dire . . . = That amounts to saying . . .

Cela revient au même = It comes to the same thing.

Je reviens de loin = (lit.) I come from a long distance; (fig.) I am recovering from a long illness.

Son nom ne me revient pas = I do not recollect his name.

Sa figure me revient = I like his face.

Je suis bien revenu sur le compte de votre frère = I have lost all the illusions I had of your brother.

Rêver. *Cet homme rêve tout éveillé* = That man dreams with his eyes open.

Revers. **Toute médaille a son revers* = There is a dark side to every picture.

Revoir. *À revoir* = To be revised; To be gone into again.

Au revoir = Till we meet again.

Richesse. *La richesse rend honnête* = Rich men have no faults.

[The bishop's pun may be repeated: 'Get on, get honour, get honest.'

'Quand on est couronné, on a toujours le nez bien fait.'

PERRAULT, *Les Souhaits ridicules.*]

Rien. *'Dans le siècle où nous sommes,*
On ne donne rien pour rien' =

At the present day people give nothing for nothing, and precious little for sixpence.

[MOLIÈRE, *École des Femmes*, iii. 2. *Rien* here shows its derivation from *rem* (a thing). It was not always used with *ne*.]

Ne faites semblant de rien = Look as if nothing were the matter.

Comme si de rien n'était = As if nothing were the matter.

Rien. (*cont.*)

**Qui ne risque rien n'a rien* = Nothing venture, nothing win.

['Qui ne s'aventure perd cheval et mule.'
German : 'Frisch gewagt ist halb gewonnen.'
Late Latin : 'Catus amat pisces, sed non vult tingere plantam.']

**Qui ne demande rien n'a rien* = Lose nothing for want of asking ; If you do not ask, you will not get.

Il ne sait rien de rien = 1. He knows absolutely nothing. 2. He is quite in the dark.

En un rien de temps = In a trice.

En moins de rien = In less than no time.

Pas plus gros que rien = Next to nothing.

Il n'est rien moins que courageux = He is anything but courageous.

Il ne faut jurer de rien = Never prophesy unless you know ; Nothing is certain in this world but death and taxes ; You never can tell ; Anything may happen. (See *Fontaine.*)

Rien n'est sacré pour un sapeur = He sticks at nothing.

Pour rien au monde = Not for the life of me.

Rigueur. *L'habit de soirée est de rigueur* = Evening dress must be worn.

Rimer. *Cela ne rime à rien* = There is no sense in that.

Rincer. *Se rincer la dalle* (pop.) = To wet one's whistle.

Rire. **Rira bien qui rira le dernier* = They have most to laugh at who laugh last ; Let them laugh that win.

**Tel qui rit vendredi dimanche pleurera* = Sorrow treads on the heels of mirth ; Laugh to-day and cry to-morrow.

[Racine, *Plaideurs*, i. 1.]

**'Marchand qui perd ne peut rire'* = Let them laugh that win.

[Molière, *George Dandin*, ii. 5.]

Il a toujours le mot pour rire = He is ever ready with a joke ; He is full of fun.

Il m'a ri au nez = He laughed in my face.

Rire. (*cont.*)

Je me tordais de rire (fam.) = I was splitting my sides with laughter.

Il riait à gorge déployée = He was roaring with laughter.

[Also: *Rire à se désopiler la rate*, or, *Rire aux éclats.*]

Rire à se fendre la bouche jusqu'aux oreilles = To grin like a Cheshire cat.

Rire dans sa barbe (or, *sous cape*) = To laugh in one's sleeve. (See *Cape.*)

Rire du bout des dents = To force a laugh.

Il rit jaune = He laughs on the wrong side of his mouth; His laugh rings false.

Rire aux anges = 1. To laugh immoderately; 2. To laugh to oneself.

C'est un pince-sans-rire = He is a dry joker; He tells a funny story without moving a muscle of his face.

'*Je me presse de rire de tout, de peur d'être obligé d'en pleurer*' =

'And if I laugh at any mortal thing
'Tis that I may not weep.'

[Beaumarchais, *Barbier de Séville*, i. 2, and Byron, *Don Juan*, iv. 4.]

Risée. *Il est la risée de tout le monde* = He is the laughing-stock of every one.

Rivière. *La rivière ne grossit pas sans être trouble* = An increase of wealth (*or*, power) brings an increase of responsibilities.

Roche. *C'est un homme de la vieille roche* = He belongs to the good old stock; He is a man of the old school.

Claire comme de l'eau de roche = As clear as crystal.

Rogomme. *Une voix de rogomme* = A gin-croak.

Roi. *C'est la cour du roi Pétaud* = This is bedlam let loose; Dover Court—all speakers, no hearers.

[Le roi Pétaud (Lat. *peto* = I ask) was the chief whom beggars used to choose for themselves. As he had no more authority than his subjects, the name is given to a house where every one is master. These beggars used to collect at the *Cour des Miracles* near the Porte St. Denis. It was so called because

Roi. (*cont.*) the infirmities with which they imposed on the charitable used to disappear by a miracle when they reached home.

Comp. Molière, *Tartufe*, i. 1:

'On n'y respecte rien, chacun y parle haut,
Et c'est tout justement la cour du roi Pétaud.'

A variant is: *C'est une vraie pétaudière.*]

Le roi n'est pas son cousin = He is very haughty (so that he would not acknowledge the King as his cousin).

[In olden times, and in state documents even to-day, the King would address as 'cousin' great lords, cardinals, and high dignitaries of state.]

Rompre. *Applaudir un acteur à tout rompre* = To applaud an actor so as to bring the house down (to lift the roof).

Il faut que cela plie ou rompe = It must be mended or ended.

C'est un homme rompu aux affaires = He is a thorough man of business.

Rondement. *Il y va rondement* = He acts frankly and quickly.

Il mènera cette affaire rondement = He will not dally about that matter.

Rose. *Il n'est point de rose sans épines* = Every rose has its thorn; No rose without a thorn.

[*Pas de ciel sans nuage; pas de rose sans épines* = 'The course of true love never did run smooth.'—*Midsummer Night's Dream* i. 1. Compare:

'Jamais nous ne goûtons de parfaite allégresse,
Nos plus heureux succès sont mêlés de tristesse.'

Corneille, *Le Cid*, iii. 5.]

Je ne suis pas la rose, mais j'ai vécu près d'elle = I am not the real thing, but I am the nearest imitation you can get.

[This sentence has been attributed to Benjamin Constant by Abraham Hayward in his introduction to Mrs. Piozzi's *Autobiography*; but it is not to be found in his writings. King refers it to Sa'di, the Persian poet, who describes a lump of clay, accounting for its perfume in these words.]

'*Et, rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses,*
L'espace d'un matin' =

A rose lives but a day, but how perfect it is!

[The French is from Malherbe's masterpiece, *Consolation à Monsieur du Périer.*]

Rose. (*cont.*) *'Vivez, si m'en croyez, n'attendez à demain, Cueillez dès aujourd'huy les roses de la vie'* =

'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying.'

[It would be difficult to say which of the two poems from which these extracts are taken is the more perfect: Ronsard's best-known sonnet beginning: 'Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir, à la chandelle', or Herrick's lighter lyric.]

Rôti. *Il ne faut pas s'endormir sur le rôti* = We must keep our wits about us; We must not neglect our work; We must not be too slow over it; We must not rest on our laurels.

[Literally, One should not go to sleep whilst the meat is cooking.]

Roue. *Il fait la roue* = He shows off.

[Literally of a peacock: to spread out its tail feathers like a wheel.]

Rouge. *Se fâcher tout rouge* = To get into a passion.

Voir rouge = To be seized with a sudden thirst for blood.

Rouge comme une pivoine = As red as a lobster.

Roulette. *Cela marche comme sur des roulettes* = That is getting on swimmingly; That goes on greased wheels.

Route. *En route, mauvaise troupe!* = Be off with you, you pack of rascals!

Royaliste. *Être plus royaliste que le roi* (*plus catholique que le pape*) = To out-Herod Herod.

[An expression first applied to the members of la Chambre des Députés during the Restoration (1815–30).]

Royauté. *'La royauté, place noyée de lumière où toute tache paraît une fange sordide'* =

'In that fierce light which beats upon a throne
And blackens every blot.'

[Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, Dedication.]

Rubis. *Faire* (or, *payer*) *rubis sur l'ongle* = To pay to the last farthing.

[This expression means literally to drain a tumbler so completely

Rubis. (*cont.*) that there just remains in it one drop of wine, which being put on the nail looks like a ruby.

'Je sirote mon vin, quel qu'il soit, vieux, nouveau ;
Je fais rubis sur l'ongle et n'y mets jamais d'eau.'

REGNARD, *Folies amoureuses*, iii. 4.]

Ruisseau. **Les petits ruisseaux font les grandes rivières* = Many a little makes a mickle.

S.

Sac. **Autant pèche celui qui tient le sac que celui qui met dedans* = The receiver is as bad as the thief.

['Wer die Leiter hält ist so schuldig wie der Dieb.']

Tu sais que je n'ai plus le sac = You know I have no more money.

Un homme de sac et de corde = A regular ruffian.

[i.e. a man who deserves to be drowned in a sack or hanged with a rope.]

Prendre quelqu'un la main dans le sac = To catch any one in the very act, red-handed. (See *Délit.*)

Il m'a laissé voir le fond du sac = I guessed his intentions in spite of him.

Juger sur l'étiquette du sac = To judge by appearances.

**Dans les petits sacs sont les fines épices* = Little fellows are often great wits ; Small parcels hold fine wares. (See *Aune* and *Onguent*)

Il faut lier le sac avant qu'il soit plein = You must not be too greedy. (See *Embrasser.*)

Votre affaire est dans le sac = Your business (matter) is getting on swimmingly.

Saigner. *Il les saigne à blanc* = He sucks them dry.

[Literally : to bleed some one so much that the blood from being red runs white.]

Saint. *Tout le saint-frusquin* (fam.) = The whole jolly lot (referring to money or clothes. See *Boutique*).

Toute la sainte journée = The whole blessed (*or*, livelong) day.

Saint. (*cont.*) *Je ne sais à quel saint me vouer* = I do not know which way to turn; Now I'm in a cleft stick.

Chacun prêche pour son saint = Every one tries to further his own interests.

Salut. **À bon entendeur salut* = A word to the wise is enough. *Verb. sap.* (See *Avis.*)

Sang. *Cela fait faire du mauvais sang* = That causes one to worry.

Suer sang et eau (fam.) = To strain every nerve.

**Bon sang ne peut mentir* = Good breeding always shows itself; Like father, like son.

Avec un sang-froid inébranlable = As cool as a cucumber.

Sapeur. *Rien n'est sacré pour un sapeur* = He sticks at nothing; He has the devil's own impudence.

[The refrain of a well-known song sung by Thérésa at the Alcazar in 1864.]

Sapin. *Sa toux sent le sapin* = He has a churchyard cough.

[*Sapin* = deal, of which coffins are made.]

Sauce. *On ne sait à quelle sauce le mettre* = There is no knowing what to do with him.

**Trop de cuisiniers gâtent la sauce* = Too many cooks spoil the broth.

[Although this may be but a translation of the English proverb, it is of constant use in France.]

Saut. *Il fait tout par sauts et par bonds* = He does everything by fits and starts.

Je le ferai demain au saut du lit = I will do it the first thing to-morrow morning.

Sauter. *Il s'est fait sauter la tête* (or, *la cervelle*; more fam. *le caisson*) = He blew his brains out.

Faire sauter la banque = To break the bank (gambling).

Sauver. **Sauve qui peut!* = Every one for himself; Run for your lives!

Je me sauve = I must be off.

Savoir. *Je ne sais comment cela est arrivé* = I am at a loss to explain how it happened.

Pas que je sache = Not to my knowledge.

Je suis tout je ne sais comment = I am out of sorts; I feel I don't know how.

[Also: *Je suis tout chose.*]

C'est à savoir = That remains to be seen.

Il en sait plus d'une (fam.) = He knows more than one trick; He knows a trick or two.

Il a beaucoup de savoir-faire = He has his wits about him; He knows how to manage people.

Il a du savoir-vivre = He knows how to behave; He is well-bred.

Un je ne sais quoi = A 'something' (I know not what); An indefinable something.

**De savoir vient avoir* = Knowledge is power. (See *Vouloir.*)

**Qui plus sait plus se tait* = A still tongue shows a wise head.

**Qui rien ne sait, de rien ne doute* = Who knows nothing, doubts nothing; Ignorance is bliss.

Il ne voulait rien savoir = He would not hear of it.

Savon. *Je lui donnerai un savon* (fam.) = I will blow him up; I will give him beans.

[German: 'Ich werde ihm den Kopf waschen.']

Scène. *Je lui ai fait une scène* = 1. I had a row with him. 2. I reproached (*or*, abused) him violently.

Scie. *Quelle scie!* (fam.) = What a bore!

[*Scie* = saw suggests a monotonous boring sound frequently repeated as in the sawing of wood. This expression is used of any well-known tune or popular expression frequently repeated.]

Séance. *Séance tenante* = Forthwith; There and then.

Sec. *C'est un grand sec* = He is a tall, spare man.

Sec comme un pendu = As thin as a lath.

Boire sec = To drink hard; (lit. neat, without adding water).

Sec. (*cont.*) *Il est à sec* (pop.) = He is hard up, broke, in low water, in Queer Street, on the rocks. (See *Diable.*)

Sec comme une allumette = As dry as a bone.

C'est un fruit sec = He has failed to enter the profession he desired.

[Génin relates the following anecdote told him by a former pupil of the École Polytechnique: 'Il y avait à l'école un élève venu d'une des provinces du midi où son père faisait un grand commerce de fruits secs. Ce jeune homme dont la vocation n'était pas du côté des mathématiques travaillait peu ou ne travaillait du tout. Quand ses camarades essayaient de le stimuler, par la crainte de manquer ses examens et de perdre sa carrière, il répondait d'un ton insouciant et avec un accent provençal: "Qu'est-ce que cela me fait? Je serai dans les fruits secs comme mon père." Ce mot obstinément répété fit fortune. Le jeune homme fut effectivement dans les fruits secs, et depuis on a répété ce mot par allusion et par euphémisme.']

Sécher. *Sécher sur pied* = To pine away.

Secours. *Crier au secours* = To cry for help.

Secret. **Secret de deux, secret de Dieu,*
Secret de trois, secret de tous =
No secret but between two; Three may keep counsel if two be away.

[German: 'Was drei wissen, erfahren bald dreissig.']

Seigneur. **À tout seigneur tout honneur* = Honour to whom honour is due.

Sel. *Mettre du sel sous la queue d'un oiseau* = To put salt on a bird's tail.

Pour bien connaître un homme il faut avoir mangé un boisseau de sel avec lui = Sudden friendship, sure repentance; A man's real nature is not known in a day.

Sellette. *Mettre sur la sellette* = To cross-question; To haul over the coals (fam.).

[*La sellette* was the small wooden seat on which a culprit sat during his trial.]

Semaine. *Cet officier est de semaine* = He is officer of the week.

Il dépensa toute sa semaine = He spent all his week's wages (*or*, pocket money).

Semaine. (*cont.*) *Je le ferai la semaine des trois* (*quatre*) *jeudis* = I shall do it in a week of Sundays (i. e. never).
[Also : *Je le ferai quand les poules auront des dents.*]
Prêter à la petite semaine = To lend money at high interest for a short time.

Semblable. *A-t-on jamais vu rien de semblable ?* = Did you ever see such a thing ?
Rien de semblable = Nothing of the sort.

Sembler. *Comme bon vous semble* = Just as you please.
Si bon vous semble = If you think fit.
C'est ce qui me semble = That is precisely what I thought.

Semelle. *Lever la semelle devant quelqu'un* = To show any one a clean pair of heels.

Sens. *Cela tombe sous le sens* = That is self-evident, obvious.
Sens dessus dessous = Upside down ; Topsy-turvy.
Sens devant derrière = Wrong side first.
À contresens = Contrary to the meaning ; In the wrong way.

Sentir. *Cela ne sent pas bon* = (fig.) I don't like the look of that.
Je ne me sens pas de joie = I am beside myself with joy.
Elle ne se sent pas d'aise d'avoir une robe neuve = She is overjoyed at having a new dress.

Service. *Qu'y a-t-il pour votre service ?* = What can I do for you ?

Servir. *Madame est servie* = Dinner is served.
À quoi sert de vous mettre en colère ? = What is the use of getting angry ?
'On n'est jamais si bien servi que par soi-même' = If you want a thing well done do it yourself.
[Étienne, *Brueys et Palaprat*, ii.]

Si. *Il n'y a pas de si qui fasse* = There is no excuse for it.

Si. (*cont.*)

Avec un si on mettrait Paris dans une bouteille = Such suppositions are idle ; If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.

Il n'est pas riche.—Oh! que si = He is not rich.—Isn't he, though!

Siège.

Mon siège est fait = I do not intend to alter what I have written.

[The Abbé Vertot (1655–1735) wrote a history of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem and completed the account of the siege of Rhodes before certain important documents reached him. He refused to rewrite his work and contented himself with saying: 'J'en suis fâché, mais mon siège est fait.']

Sien.

**Chacun le sien n'est pas trop* = Let each have his own, then all is fair.

Il fait des siennes = He is up to his old tricks again.

Il en sera du sien = He will be a loser by it.

On n'est jamais trahi que par les siens = It is always one's friends (*or*, confederates) who betray one.

Singe.

Le singe est toujours singe, fût-il vêtu de pourpre =

'An ape's an ape, a varlet's a varlet,
Though they be clad in silk or scarlet.'

[Ben Jonson, *Poetaster*, v. 3.

Also: *Lavez chien, peignez chien,*
Toujours n'est chien que chien =
Wash a dog, comb a dog,
Still a dog is but a dog. (See *Buse.*)]

Il l'a payé en monnaie de singe = He paid him with promises ; He jeered at him instead of paying him.

[This expression originated in the ordinance of St. Louis regulating the payment of the tolls at the gates of Paris. Showmen were exempted from payment on causing their apes to skip and dance in front of the toll-keeper. Comp. Estienne Boileau, *Establissements des métiers de Paris*, Chapitre del péage de Petit Pont:—'Li singes au marchant doibt quatre deniers, se il por vendre le porte: se li singes est a homme qui l'aist acheté por son déduit, si est quites, et se li singes est au joueur, jouer en doibt devant le péagier, et por son jeu doibt estre quites de toute la chose qu'il achète à son usage et aussitôt le jongleur sont quite por un ver de chanson.']

Il est malin comme un singe = He is as full of mischief as an egg is of meat.

Soif. **On ne saurait faire boire un âne s'il n'a soif* = One man can take a horse to the water, but twenty cannot make him drink. (See *Âne.*)

Soldat. *Tout soldat a dans sa giberne un bâton de maréchal de France; c'est à lui de l'en faire sortir* = Every soldier in a democratic army can rise to the highest position. (See *Carrière.*)

Ce qui tombe dans le fossé, c'est pour le soldat = Findings keepings. (See *Prendre.*)

Soleil. *Montrer le soleil avec un flambeau* = To hold a farthing rushlight to the sun; To paint the lily.

[Also: *On ne peut ni dorer le soleil ni argenter la lune.* Compare YOUNG, *Satires*, vii. 97.]

On adore plutôt le soleil levant que le soleil couchant = People like to be on the winning side.

[Contrast:

'Let others hail the rising sun,
I bow to that whose course is run.'

GARRICK, *Ode on Death of Henry Pelham* (1754).]

Solide. *Il songe au solide* = He has an eye to the main chance.

Il est solide au poste = He is to be depended upon.

Sommation. *Faire les trois sommations* = To read the Riot Act.

Somme (*m.*) *Je n'ai fait qu'un somme* = I never woke all night.

Somme (*f.*) *Somme toute* = After all is said and done; Taking everything into consideration; To conclude.

En somme = On the whole; In the main.

Songe. *'Puisqu'en vous il est faux que songes sont mensonges'* = Since with you it is untrue that dreams go by contraries.

[MOLIÈRE, *Étourdi*, iv. 3.]

**Mal d'autrui n'est que songe* = Other people's woes do not affect us much.

C'est un songe-creux = He is full of idle fancies (*or*, day-dreams); He is a wool-gatherer.

Sonner. *Elle a quarante ans bien sonnés* = She is over forty.

Il est trois heures sonnées = It has struck three.

On a sonné sonneras-tu la cloche = He rang the bell as loudly as he could.

[A rare use of the future for the superlative.]

Payer en bonnes espèces sonnantes (*et trébuchantes*) = To pay in hard cash.

Sornette. *Il nous berce de sornettes* = He puts us off with silly tales.

Sort. *Le sort en est jeté* = The die is cast; *Alea jacta est.*

[Suetonius (*Julius Caesar*, 33) attributes this saying to Caesar on his crossing the Rubicon.]

Elle lui a jeté un sort = She cast a spell over him; He is infatuated with her.

Tirer au sort = To draw lots (for the army, &c.).

Sorte. *Je lui ai parlé de la bonne sorte* = I gave it him soundly; I gave him a piece of my mind.

Sortie. *Il a fait une sortie* = He flew into a passion.

Sot. *C'est un sot en trois lettres* = He is a thorough fool.

Quelque sot le ferait = One would be a fool to do that.

**À sotte question point de réponse* = Answer a fool according to his folly; A silly question needs no answer.

Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire = Even a fool will always find admirers; Folly is wise in her own eyes.

[Boileau, *Art Poétique*, I.]

Il n'y a pas de sots métiers, il n'y a que de sottes gens = People may be petty, but work never is.

'Les sots depuis Adam sont en majorité' = The world consists of so many millions, mostly fools.

[The French is a quotation from Casimir Delavigne's *Épître sur 'L'Étude fait-elle le bonheur?'* The English is attributed to Carlyle.

'Le monde est plein de fous, et qui n'en veut pas voir
Doit se tenir tout seul et casser son miroir.'

Derived from Claude le Petit, *Satire* iv (1686), and ascribed to many.]

Sou. *Il a fait de cent sous quatre livres, et de quatre livres rien* = He has brought his noble to ninepence, and his ninepence to nothing.

[*Livre* here has nothing to do with our English pound sterling. It is practically the equivalent of the modern franc. Hence the proverb means: He reduced 100 sous to eighty sous.]

Une affaire de deux sous = A twopenny-halfpenny affair.

Cela vaut mille francs comme un sou = It is worth £40 if it is worth a penny.

'*La popularité, c'est la gloire en gros sous.*' = Popularity is glory of a very low kind.

[Victor Hugo, *Ruy Blas*, iii. 5.

'The standard of praise is when true judges join,
But the cry of the crowd is renown in base coin.'
Austin Dobson.]

Souche. *C'est une vraie souche* = He is a regular log.

Faire souche = To found a family.

Soufflet. *Donner un soufflet à Vaugelas* = To murder the King's English; To offend Lindley Murray.

[Vaugelas (1585–1650) was a celebrated writer on French grammar, one of the first members of the Académie Française, and one of the chief contributors to its Dictionary. Comp. Molière, *Les Femmes savantes*, ii. 7: 'Elle y met Vaugelas en pièces tous les jours.' *Donner un soufflet à Ronsard* was also used, and, in the Middle Ages, *Casser la tête de Priscien*, from the famous grammarian of the fourth century.]

Souhait. **Si souhaits fussent vrais, Pastoureaux rois seraient.* = If wishes were horses, Beggars would ride.

[Compare *Si.*
Also: *En souhaitant nul ne s'enrichit.*]

Tout me réussit à souhait = I am as successful as I could wish.

Souhaiter. *Je t'en souhaite!* (pop.) = I wish you may get it.

Souhaiter la bonne année à quelqu'un = To wish some one a happy new year.

Soûl. **À merle soûl cerises sont amères* = Plenty makes dainty.

Soûl. (*cont.*) *Parler tout son soûl* (pop.) = To speak to one's heart's content.

Soûl comme une grive = As drunk as a lord.

Soulier. *Être dans ses petits souliers* = To be uneasy in one's mind; To be on pins and needles.

Soumettre. *Il faut se soumettre ou se démettre* = You must give way or resign; You must knuckle under or clear out.

[Gambetta said this of Marshal MacMahon in a speech made at a banquet at Lille, Aug. 15, 1877; but MacMahon did not resign until Jan. 30, 1879.]

Soupe. *S'emporter comme une soupe au lait* = To fly into a passion without warning; To be of a very hasty temper; To flare up.

Trempé comme une soupe = Wet to the skin; Dripping wet.

C'est un marchand de soupe. (See *Marchand.*)

Souper. *J'en ai soupé* = I've had enough of it; I am fed up.

Sourd. *Sourd comme un pot* = As deaf as a post.

**Vous faites la sourde oreille* = None so deaf as those who will not hear.

Frapper comme un sourd = To beat unmercifully.

Il court un bruit sourd = A rumour is being whispered.

Ils ont recours à des menées sourdes = They have recourse to underhand dealings.

Sourdine. *Il fait ses coups à la sourdine* = He acts secretly, in an underhand manner.

Sourire. *Cela me sourit assez* = I rather like this.

Souris. **Souris qui n'a qu'un trou est bientôt prise* = It is good to have more than one string to one's bow.

**On entendrait trotter une souris* (or, *voler une mouche*) = One could hear a pin drop.

Elle est éveillée comme une petite souris (or, *comme une potée de souris*) = She is as brisk as a bee, as lively as a kitten.

Souvenir. *Autant que je puisse m'en souvenir* = To the best of my recollection.

Souvenir. (*cont.*) *C'est du plus loin qu'il me souvienne* = 1. I can barely remember it. 2. It is as far back as I can recollect.

Souvent. *Plus souvent!* (fam.) = Not if I know it! Twice!

Succès. *Un succès d'estime* = A meritorious performance; An indifferent success.

Sucre. *Casser du sucre sur la tête de quelqu'un* (pop.) = To speak ill of any one in his absence.

Suite. *Cette maladie peut avoir des suites* = That illness may have serious consequences.

Il n'a pas l'esprit de suite = He is not consistent; He keeps at nothing long; He is not persevering enough.

Suite (of a serial story or article) = Continuation; Continued.

[Also: *Suite et fin* = Conclusion.
À suivre = To be continued.
La suite au prochain numéro = To be continued in our next.]

Sujet. *Être sujet à l'heure* = To be tied to time.

Être sujet à caution = Not to be relied upon. (See *Caution.*)

C'est un mauvais sujet = He is a scamp, 'a bad lot'.

[This is used in speaking of tiresome children, of flighty young men, and of real rogues.]

Petit mauvais sujet! = Little rascal! (to children).

Supplice. *Être au supplice* = To be on thorns.

Sûr. *Pour sûr* (fam.) = I should think so, indeed! You bet your life!

T.

Table. *Tenir table ouverte* = To keep open house.

Faire table rase = To make a clean sweep and begin again; To start everything afresh.

Jouer cartes sur table = To act frankly, above board.

Tâche. *Prendre à tâche* = To make it one's business.

Travailler à la tâche = To work by the piece.

Taillable. *Vilains taillables et corvéables à merci* = Serfs taxable and workable at their lord's will and pleasure.

Taille. *Il est de taille à se défendre* = He is big enough to defend himself.

'Ils nous ont fait une France à leur taille' (BÉRANGER) = They have brought France down to their level.

Se tenant par la taille = With their arms round each other's waists.

Frapper d'estoc et de taille = 1. To cut and thrust. 2. To hit right and left; To lay about one.

Talon. *Il a l'esprit aux talons* = He shines at the wrong end; He is not witty.

La bande se dispersa, les talons aux épaules = The gang took to their heels.

J'ai l'estomac dans les talons = I am very hungry.

Tambour. *On l'a mené tambour battant* = They led him with a high hand; They played the martinet with him; They exacted implicit obedience from him.

Ils sortirent tambour battant, mèche allumée = They went out with all the honours of war.

Tant. *Tous tant que nous sommes* = Every one of us.

Être tant à tant = To be even (in a game).

Si cela vous ennuie tant soit peu, ne le faites pas = If that gives the least trouble, do not do it.

Elle n'est pas jolie, tant s'en faut = She is not pretty, far from it; She is anything but good-looking.

Vous m'en direz tant = That alters the case; Ah! now I understand. (See *Dire*.)

Est-ce qu'elle est belle?—Elle est comme il y en a tant = Is she beautiful?—Nothing to stare at; Nothing out of the common.

Vous l'avez fait tant bien que mal = You did it in a casual (off-hand) way, perfunctorily.

Tant. (*cont.*) *Je l'ai fait tant bien que mal* = I did it as well as I could, though I know it is not well done.

Si tant est que . . . = If it be true that . . .

Tant de tués que de blessés, il n'y a personne de mort = The danger was not so great as it was believed to be.

Tapis. *Être sur le tapis* = To be the subject of general conversation; To be broached.

[Two centuries ago *le tapis* was the usual word for a table-cover and not a carpet. The curious may refer to correspondence in *The Times* Literary Supplement for Sept. and Oct. 1918.]

Amuser le tapis (or, *la galerie*) = To amuse people by talking the time away.

Tapisserie. *Faire tapisserie* (fam.) = To be a wallflower at a ball.

Tard. **Mieux vaut tard que jamais* = Better late than never.

[This is first found in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (ix. 11): 'It is better beginning late doing our duties than never.']

Tarder. *Il me tarde de parler* = I am anxious to speak.

Il ne tardera pas à venir = It will not be long before he comes.

Tarte. *C'est sa tarte à la crème* = It is his one constant objection.

[Molière, *École des Femmes*, i. 1.]

Tel. **Tel maître, tel valet* = Like master, like man; Like well, like bucket. (See *Maître*.)

**Telle vie, telle fin* = Men die as they live.

Je vous le rends tel quel = I return it to you just as it was lent to me.

Je la prendrai telle quelle = I will take it just as it is.

Ce sont des gens tels quels (fam.) = They are 'no great shakes', just ordinary people, humdrum people.

'*Tel est pris qui croyait prendre*' = It is a case of the biter bit.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, viii. 9. (See *Guillot* and *Laine*.)]

Monsieur un tel = Mr. So-and-So.

Tempête. *C'est une tempête dans un verre d'eau* = It is a storm in a tea-cup.

[The Grand Duke Paul of a rising at Geneva.]

Gare la tempête = Look out for squalls.

Temps. *Il se donne du bon temps* = He does not work too hard; He enjoys himself; he has a good time of it.

Il prend le temps comme il vient = He takes things easily.

Cela a fait son temps = That has had its day.

**Du temps que Berthe filait* = When the world was young; When Adam delved and Eve span.

Si le temps le permet = Wind and weather permitting; If time allows.

Le temps est à la pluie = It looks like rain.

**Le temps perdu ne se répare* (or, *rattrape*) *pas* = Time wasted is gone indeed; Procrastination is the thief of time.

**Qui a temps a vie* = While there is life, there is hope; *Dum spiro spero.*

Par le temps qui court = Nowadays; As times go.

**Autres temps, autres mœurs* = Manners change with the times.

Au temps! = As you were! (military command).

[This is sometimes incorrectly written '*Autant*', but military movements were formerly divided into *temps*. When the drill-sergeant makes a mistake in giving the word of command, he says, 'Au temps pour moi' = 'My mistake: as you were!']

Changement de temps, entretien de sots = Only fools talk about the weather.

[If this be true, the majority of Englishmen must belong to the class of fools, as Carlyle said they did.]

En deux temps trois mouvements = In double quick time.

Il faut donner le temps au temps = We must not be in too great a hurry.

Tendre. *Il vaut mieux tendre la main que le cou* = It is better to beg than to steal.

Tendre. (*cont.*) **L'arc toujours tendu se gâte* = All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

['Neque semper arcum tendit Apollo.'—Horace, *Odes*, II. x. 20.
Also: *À trop tirer la corde casse.*]

Tendresse. *Tendresse maternelle* / *Toujours se renouvelle* } = { A mother's truth / Keeps constant / youth.

[Archbishop Trench quotes the French and German forms as rhyming equally well in both languages; the English, he confesses, is not such a good translation. The German is:

'Mutter Treu'
Wird täglich neu.']

Tenir. *Il ne tint à rien qu'ils ne se battissent* = They were within an ace of fighting.

Quand on est bien, on ne s'y peut tenir = The love of change makes us give up even a comfortable position.

**Un tiens vaut mieux que deux tu l'auras* = A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

[La Fontaine, *Fables*, v. 3.
Also: *Un bon aujourd'hui vaut mieux que deux demain*, and *Il vaut mieux tenir que courir.*]

Il tient de son père = He takes after his father.

Il tient à ce livre = He treasures that book.

Je ne tiens plus à rien = I no longer care for anything.

Il ne tiendra pas à moi qu'il ne réussisse = It will not be my fault if he does not succeed.

Je le tiens de bonne source = I have it on good authority.

Tenir le loup par les oreilles = To be in a critical situation, dilemma.

On le tient à quatre = It needs four men to hold him down.

Je me suis tenu à quatre pour ne pas lui dire ses vérités = It was almost more than I could do not to tell him what I thought of him.

Il n'y a pas d'amitié qui tienne = Friendship has nothing to do with the question; It must be done in spite of friendship.

Tenir. (*cont.*)

Qu'à cela ne tienne = Do not let that be any objection; Never mind that; If that is all you want.

Je n'y tiens pas = I am not particular about it; I am not keen on it.

Je n'y tiens plus = I cannot stand it any longer.

Je n'y ai pas tenu = I could not contain myself.

Je ne sais à quoi m'en tenir = I do not know what to believe.

Tenir comme teigne (pop.) = To stick like wax.

À quoi cela tient-il? = What is that owing to?

Il ne tient qu'à lui de commencer = It rests entirely with him to begin; He can begin when he likes.

Cela lui tient au cœur = He is anxious about it.

Il n'a pas cédé, il a tenu bon = He did not give way, he stuck to it.

Tenez-vous-le pour dit = Take it for granted; Bear that in mind.

Il en tient = 1. He is smitten. 2. He is caught.

Tenez-vous-en là = Stop there, go no further in the matter; Be satisfied with what you have already obtained.

Tiens! c'est vous? = Hullo! is that you?

Tiens, tiens! = Indeed, you don't say so!

Terme.

**Il y a terme à tout* = There is an end to everything.

[A German proverb says: 'Everything has an end—a sausage two.']

**Qui a terme ne doit rien* = No one is obliged to pay before a debt is due.

Le terme vaut l'argent = Time is money.

Ménagez un peu vos termes = Moderate your expressions a little; Be a little careful in what you say.

Terrain.

En mathématiques il est sur son terrain = He is quite in his element at mathematics.

Tâter le terrain (fig.) = To feel one's way; To sound some one.

Terroir. *Il sent le terroir* = He is racy of the soil; He savours of his country.

Tête. *Il a la tête près du bonnet* = He is hasty, hot-headed.

**Ce sont deux têtes dans un bonnet* = They are hand and glove together.

Cet homme y va tête baissée = That man rushes blindly into it; That man sets to work energetically.

C'est un homme de tête = He has a head on his shoulders; He is a man of resource.

Il s'est monté la tête = He got excited over fancied or exaggerated wrongs.

C'est une tête carrée = He is an obstinate fellow.

J'en ai par-dessus la tête = 1. I am sick and tired of it. 2. I am head over ears in it.

Je lui laverai la tête (pop.) = I will give it to him; I will give him a sound drubbing.

Il ne sait où donner de la tête = He does not know which way to turn.

[*Donner* here has the meaning of *heurter, frapper de la tête.*]

Donner de la tête contre le mur = To hit one's head against a stone wall.

La tête me tourne = I feel giddy; My head swims.

Il a mauvaise tête = He is a wrong-headed fellow.

Il fait à sa tête = He will have his own way.

Faire la tête = To be sulky.

Cet homme a mauvaise tête et bon cœur = That man is quick-tempered, but kind-hearted.

Vous lui avez tenu tête = You did not give in to him.

Cet homme a de la tête = That man has his head screwed on the right way.

Il se payait ma tête = He was pulling my leg.

Tiers. *Il ne faut pas dire vos affaires au tiers et au quart* = You must not tell your business to all the world, to everybody.

Le tiers et le quart = Tom, Dick, and Harry.

Timbre. *Il a le timbre fêlé* (fam.) = He is cracked; He has a screw loose, a tile off; He is a bit weak in the upper storey; He has not got all his buttons on; He is not quite all there.

[Other French equivalents are: *Il est timbre; Il a la boule détraquée.*]

Tirer. *Il se fera tirer l'oreille* = He will require pressing.

Il tire le diable par la queue = He leads a struggling existence.

Vous ne me tirerez pas les vers du nez = You will not pump me (i. e. make me tell secrets).

Cet homme se tirerait d'un puits = That man would get out of any difficulty, is full of resource.

Je me ferais tirer à quatre avant de parler = Wild horses would not make me speak.

Il tire (*touche*) *à sa fin* = He is on his last legs.

Je saurai en tirer parti = I shall be able to turn it to account.

**Tirez le rideau, la farce est jouée* = Ring down the curtain, the play is over.

[Words reported to have been said by Rabelais just before his death. He is also reported to have said: 'Je m'en vais chercher un grand peut-être', with which may be compared 'The grand Perhaps' of *Bishop Blougram's Apology.*]

Titre. *On m'a donné cela à titre gratuit* (or, *gracieux*) = They gave me that for nothing (as a matter of courtesy).

Cet or n'est pas au titre légal = This gold is not up to the standard.

À ce titre (*compte*) *j'y perds* = At that rate I am a loser.

Toit. *Crier par-dessus les toits* = To proclaim from the house-tops.

Tomber. *Je tombe d'accord avec vous sur ce point* = I am at one with you on that head.

Je tombe des nues = I am astounded.

Cet homme-là est bien tombé = That man has fallen on his feet; That man has applied to the right person, (*or*, ironic.) to the wrong person.

Tomber. (*cont.*) *L'enfant tombe par terre, mais le fruit tombe à terre* = A child falls on the ground, while fruit falls to the earth.

[*Par terre* = from one's own height; *à terre* = from any height.]

Tonnerre. *Il éclata comme un coup de tonnerre dans un ciel serein* = It came like a bolt from the blue.

Tordre. *Je me tordais de rire* (fam.) = I was splitting my sides (*or*, convulsed) with laughter.

C'était à se tordre (or, *c'était roulant*) = It was killing, screamingly funny.

Tort. *Vous vous êtes mis dans votre tort* = You put yourself in the wrong.

À tort ou à raison = Rightly or wrongly.

À tort et à travers = At random, thoughtlessly.

Tôt. **Le plus tôt sera le mieux* = The sooner, the better.

Toucher. *Elle a l'air de ne pas y toucher* = She looks as if butter would not melt in her mouth; She is very sarcastic without appearing to mean anything. (Comp. *Nitouche.*)

C'est un touche-à-tout = He is a Jack of all trades; He meddles with everything.

Cela touche à la folie = That is but one remove from madness; That borders on lunacy.

Touchez là = Here's my hand on it.

Tour. *Faire ses quinze* (or, *trente-six*) *tours* = To do a hundred useless things.

**À chacun son tour* = Every dog has his day; Now it is *my* turn.

['The cat will mew and dog will have his day.'
Hamlet, v. i.]

Elle est faite au tour (or, *moule*) = She has a splendid figure.

Il fit cela en un tour de main = He did that in a moment.

Un tour de faveur = Permission to go (*or*, do anything) before one's turn.

Tout. *Risquer le tout pour le tout* = To risk all to win all; To go the whole hog.

Trac. *Avoir le trac* (or, *la frousse*) = To be funky; To suffer from stage-fright; To show the white feather.

Train. *Mettre une affaire en train* = To put a thing in hand.

Pas dans le train = Not up to date; Of an older school.

Il le mène bon train dans cette affaire = He drives him hard in that matter.

Il nous a menés bon train = He brought us along at a great rate.

Allez toujours votre train = Go on as usual.

Au train dont il y va, il sera bientôt ruiné = At the rate he is going on, he will soon be ruined.

Il est en train d'écrire = He is in the act of writing; He is just writing.

Je ne suis pas en train ce matin = I do not feel myself this morning.

Il est en train (pop.) = He is slightly intoxicated (*or*, in good spirits).

Faire du train (pop.) = To kick up a dust (fig.).

Il mène grand train = He lives like a lord.

À fond de train = At full speed. (See *Étrier*.)

Trait. *Ce que vous dites n'a pas trait à la question* = What you say has nothing to do with the question.

Ce sont là de vos traits = That is just like you.

Avaler d'un trait = To drink off at one gulp, at a draught.

Traite. *Tout d'une traite* = At a stretch, without stopping.

Traiter. *Il m'a traité de fat* = He called me a fop.

Il m'a traité en roi = He treated me like a lord.

Traître. *Il n'a pas dit un traître mot* = He never spoke a single word.

Tramontane. *Perdre la tramontane* = Not to know which way to turn; To lose one's head.

Tramontane. (*cont.*) [Literally, to lose one's bearings. *Tramontane* is derived from the Italian *tramontana* and originally meant the pole-star, which was the star seen from the Mediterranean across the mountains (the Alps). Compare *s'orienter*. *Perdre la boussole* is oftener used now. (See *Boule.*)]

Trancher. *Cet homme n'est pas très honnête, tranchons le mot, c'est un coquin* = That man is not very honourable, in plain English, he is a rascal. (See *Mot.*)

Trancher la question, la difficulté = To cut the Gordian knot; To solve the difficulty.

Trancher du grand seigneur = To try and play the lord.

Trancher dans le vif = (lit.) To cut to the quick; (fig.) To set to work in earnest.

Travers. *Il a l'esprit de travers* = He has an awkward temper; He does not see things as they are; He is cross-grained.

Il me regarda de travers = He looked black (askance) at me.

Il prend tout de travers = He takes everything amiss.

Tréfonds. *J'en sais le fonds et le tréfonds* = I know the ins and outs of it, the long and the short of it.

[Also: *Je connais les tenants et aboutissants de l'affaire.* (See *Coin* and *Pli.*)]

Tremper. *Nous fûmes trempés jusqu'aux os* = We were wet to the skin.

Trente. *Être sur son trente-et-un* (fam.) = To be dressed up to the nines; To be in full feather, in one's glad rags.

Tricherie. **Tricherie revient à son maître* = Curses, like chickens, come home to roost.

Trier. *Les soldats de la Garde étaient tous triés sur le volet* = The soldiers of the Guard were all picked men.

[*Volet* is a gardener's board on which he sorts seeds.]

Triste. *C'est un triste sire* = He is a despicable, dishonourable fellow.

Tromper. *Il n'y a pas à s'y tromper* = There is no mistake about it.

'Il n'y a que ceux qui ne font rien qui ne se trompent pas' = A man who never made a mistake never made anything.

[The French is a quotation from Favre's *Recherches géologiques*, iii. 76. The English has been attributed to Lord Kitchener.]

Trop. *Je ne sais trop* = I don't exactly know.

**Qui dit trop ne dit rien* = He who wants to prove too much proves nothing.

Trou. *Faire un trou à la lune* (fam.) = To shoot the moon; To fly from one's creditors.

Troubler. *C'est un trouble-fête* = He is a mar-joy, a wet blanket.

Trousse. *Le voleur fuyait, mais nous étions à ses trousses* = The thief made off, but we were at his heels, hot on his track.

Trouver. *Cela se trouve bien* = That is lucky.

Tu. *Être à tu et à toi* = To be on very familiar terms with.

Tuer. *Crier à tue-tête* = To shout at the top of one's voice.

U.

Un. *Ne faire ni une ni deux* = To make no bones about it; To make up one's mind quickly.

C'est tout un = It is all the same.

Union. **L'union fait la force* = United we stand, divided we fall; Union is strength.

Usage. *Usage fait droit* = Custom has the force of law.

Il n'a pas l'usage du monde = He is ignorant of the rules of good society.

Usine. *Ce ne sont que des usines à bachot* (pop.) = They are mere cramming-shops.

[*Bachot* = *baccalauréat* = matriculation. The French equivalent for our B.A. is rather *licencié-ès-lettres*, although the examinations in the two countries are so different that any comparison is very difficult.]

V.

Vache. *Parler français comme une vache espagnole* = To talk horribly bad French. (See *Français.*)

'Un homme qui n'a jamais mangé de la vache enragée n'est jamais qu'une poule mouillée' (Mme. DE GIRARDIN) = A man who has never roughed it is always a milksop.

[*Manger de la vache enragee* infers great poverty, as no one would eat the meat of diseased cows unless forced by hunger.]

C'est le grand chemin des vaches = That is the beaten track.

Le plancher des vaches (fam.) = Terra firma.

Vaincre. **'À vaincre sans péril, on triomphe sans gloire'* = Where there is no danger, there is no glory to be gained by conquest.

[CORNEILLE, *Cid*, ii. 2. Compare: 'Scit eum sine gloria vinci qui sine periculo vincitur.'—SENECA, *De Providentia*, iii.]

Valet. *Il n'y a pas de grand homme pour son valet de chambre* = No man is a hero to his valet. (See *Accoutumer.*)

On ne prend pas de valet pour se servir soi-même = What! keep a dog and bark thyself!

Valeur. *'Aux âmes bien nées*
La valeur n'attend pas le nombre des années.'
CORNEILLE, *Cid*, ii. 2.

= Really brave men show their valour when quite young; Courage is a natural, not an acquired, gift.

Des valeurs de tout repos = Gilt-edged securities.

Valoir. *Cela vaut fait* = That is as good as done.

Vaut bien que mal = *Vaille que vaille* = At all events; For better, for worse.

Il se fait trop valoir = He brags too much.

Veine. *Je suis en veine de le faire* = I am just in the humour to do it.

J'ai de la veine (pop.) = I am in luck.

Velours. *Faire patte de velours* = To speak smoothly; To draw in one's claws.

**Habit de velours, ventre de son* = Silks and satins put out the kitchen fire.

[Compare:

'Dress drains our cellar dry,
And keeps our larder lean.'

COWPER, *Task*, ii. 614.

An old French *dicton* says:

'Ne sois paon en ton parer,
Ny perroquet en ton parler,
Ny cicogne en ton manger,
Ny oye aussi en ton marcher.']

Vendre. **Chose qui plaît est à moitié vendue* = Good wares make quick market; Please the eye and fill the purse.

['Chose qui plaist est à demy vendue.'—CHARLES D'ORLÉANS, *Rondeau* 194.]

Venir. **Tout vient à point à qui sait attendre* = Everything comes to the man who waits.

[The older form of the proverb omitted the second *à*; for *qui* was equivalent to *si on*.

Italian: 'Chi ha pazienza conduce al fine ogni impresa.'

CECCHI, *I Rivali*, ii. 2 (1556).]

C'est un beau venir y voir = A pretty sight indeed!

Où voulez-vous en venir? = What are you driving at? What is your drift?

Il se vante d'en venir à bout = He says he is sure to succeed.

Vent. *Il fait un vent à décorner* (or, *écorner*) *un bœuf* = There is a wind enough to blow one's head off.

Autant en emporte le vent = That is but so much breath spent in vain; It is not of the slightest consequence; It is all idle talk.

**Vent au visage rend un homme sage* = Adversity makes a man wise, not rich.

Celui qui sème le vent récolte la tempête = He who sows the wind reaps the whirlwind; Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

Il a le vent en poupe = He is in a favourable position; He is bound to succeed.

Vent. (*cont.*)

Selon le vent la voile = To know how to trim one's sails.

Il avance contre vent et marée = He makes his way in spite of all difficulties.

Ventre.

**Ventre affamé prend tout en gré* =
'They that have no other meat
Bread and butter are glad to eat.'

**Ventre affamé n'a point d'oreilles* = A hungry man will not listen to reason; A hungry man is an angry man.

Cela lui remet du cœur au ventre (fam.) = That gives him courage again.

Savoir ce que quelqu'un a dans le ventre (fam.) = To know what a person is worth, what he thinks; To know the stuff a man is made of.

Il n'a pas trois mois dans le ventre (fam.) = He cannot live three months.

Le cheval courait ventre à terre = The horse was running as hard as he could tear.

Il était à plat ventre = He was flat on his face.

Ver.

Nu comme un ver = Stark naked; As naked as when one was born; In one's birthday suit.

Vérité.

**On dit souvent la vérité en riant* = There is many a true word spoken in jest.

Toute vérité n'est pas bonne à dire = All truths are not to be spoken at all times.

**La vérité comme l'huile vient au dessus* = Truth will out; It takes a good many shovelfuls of earth to bury the truth.

[The Spaniards say: 'La verdad es hija de Dios' = Truth is the daughter of God.]

C'est une vérité de Monsieur de la Palice = It is an evident truth.

[Jacques de Chabannes, Seigneur de la Palice (d. 1525), is the hero of a lengthy poem, one of the verses of which runs as follows:

'M. de la Palice est mort,
Mort de maladie.
Un quart d'heure avant sa mort
Il était encore en vie.']

Vérité. (*cont.*) *Il n'y a que la vérité qui blesse* = If the cap fits, wear it; The greater the truth, the greater the libel.

Verre. '*Mon verre n'est pas grand, mais je bois dans mon verre*' = A small thing, but mine own.

[The French alexandrine is by Alfred de Musset. See Édouard Fournier's *L'Esprit des Autres* (5th edition, p. 384) for similar sayings.]

Verrier. *Il court comme un verrier déchargé* = He runs like a lamplighter. (See *Chat.*)

[Glaziers, when carrying glass, have to walk carefully and slowly. When they have got rid of their load they make up for lost time.]

Vers. '*Les plus beaux vers sont ceux qu'on ne peut pas écrire.*'—(LAMARTINE, *Voyage en Orient*) =

'Ah! the best prayers that faith may ever think
Are untranslatable by pen and ink.'

Bishop ALEXANDER.

Vert. *Vous ne le prendrez pas sans vert* = You will not catch him napping.

[An old game that used to be played in May was for two people to undertake to be able always to show a green twig; failure to do so lost the game.]

Une verte vieillesse = A hale old age.

Ils sont trop verts = The grapes are sour.

[LA FONTAINE, *Le Renard et les Raisins*, iii. 11.]

Mettre un cheval au vert = To send a horse to grass.

Vessie. *Il veut nous faire prendre des vessies pour des lanternes* = He wishes us to believe the moon is made of green cheese.

['Me voulez-vous faire entendant
De vecies que ce sont lanternes?'
Maistre Pierre Pathelin, 800.]

Veste. *Remporter une veste* (fam.) = To be defeated in a contest (e. g. an election).

Vie. *Faire vie qui dure* = To live temperately; To husband one's resources.

Avoir la vie dure = 1. To have a hard time. 2. To have nine lives.

Vie. (*cont.*)

'*La vie est brève,*
Un peu d'amour,
Un peu de rêve
Et puis—bonjour' =
A little work, a little play
To keep us going—and so good day.

Much doubt exists of the authorship of this delicate little lyric entitled 'Peu de chose'. It is by Léon Montenacken, a young Belgian poet, and it appeared for the first time in 'Le Parnasse de la Jeune Belgique' in 1887. George du Maurier paraphrased it in *Trilby*. The above is the first stanza of each poem; there are four in all.]

Vieux. *Vieux comme les rues* (*comme le monde, comme Hérode*) = As old as the hills, as Adam.

C'est un homme de la vieille roche = He is a man of the old school; he belongs to the good old stock.

Un vieux de la vieille = A veteran of the old Imperial Guard; One of the old brigade.

Vieil ami et vieux vin sont vraiment deux bons vieux, mais vieux écus sont encore mieux = Old friends and old wine are good, but old gold is better than both.

['Alonzo of Arragon was wont to say, in commendation of Age, that Age appeared to be best in four things: Old wood best to burn, old wine to drink, old friends to trust, and old authors to read.'—Bacon, *Apophthegms*, 101.]

Vif. *Trancher* (or, *couper*) *dans le vif* = (lit.) To cut to the quick; (fig.) To set to work in earnest.

Ce reproche l'a piqué au vif = That reproach stung him to the quick.

Il est vif comme la poudre = 1. He is quick-tempered. 2. He is bustling, quick at work.

De vive voix = By word of mouth; Orally.

Ce sont des descriptions prises sur le vif = Those descriptions are life-like.

Les paysans dans ce roman sont pris sur le vif = The peasants in that novel are life-like.

Vigne. *Il est dans les vignes du Seigneur* = He is in his cups.

Vin. *Du vin à faire danser les chèvres* = Sour wine not fit to drink.

Vin. (*cont.*)

**À bon vin point d'enseigne* = Good wine needs no bush.

[It was a Roman custom to hang out a branch of ivy at the doors of taverns in honour of Bacchus. Branches of green stuff may still be seen at the doors of wine-shops along the Loire and in Burgundy. Kelly traces the word 'bosky' (i. e. drunk) to this bush. Publius Syrus (maxim 968) says: 'Vino vendibili suspensa hedera non opus est' = You need not hang up an ivy branch over the wine that will sell.]

Être entre deux vins = To be half seas over (pop.).

**Le vin entre, la raison sort* = When ale is in, wit is out.

On ne connaît pas le vin aux cercles = You can't judge cigars by the picture on the box; You cannot judge wine by the barrel it is in; You must not judge by appearances.

Tremper son vin = To water one's wine.

[*Tremper* = *tempérer*, not to wet, but to moderate.]

Vous mouillez trop votre vin = You are drowning the miller.

Il a le vin mauvais = He is quarrelsome in his cups.

Violent. *Cela est un peu violent* = That is too bad.

Violon. *Payer les violons* = To pay the piper.

Visière. *Je lui ai rompu en visière* = I attacked (*or*, contradicted) him openly.

['Je n'y puis plus tenir, j'enrage; et mon dessein
Est de rompre en visière à tout le genre humain.'
MOLIÈRE, *Le Misanthrope*, i. 1.

Literally the phrase means: to break one's lance against the visor of one's enemy.]

Vite. *Plus vite que ça* (fam.) = Look sharp about it.

Vivre. *Je n'ai pas trouvé âme qui vive* = I did not find a soul.

**Qui vivra verra* = He who lives longest will see most; Time will show (tell).

'Pour vivre heureux, vivons cachés' (Florian) = Far from court, far from care; Happy is the nation that has no history.

Vivre. (*cont.*)

['Crede mihi, bene qui latuit bene vixit et intra
Fortunam debet quisque manere suam.'
OVID, *Tristia*, iii. 4.

The rhyming Latin: Dormit secure cui non est functio curae.
Also:

'Ah! qu'un grand nom est un bien dangereux.
Un sort caché fut toujours plus heureux.'
GRESSET, *Vert-vert*, ii. 86.

All these are derived from Epicurus's maxim: λάθε βιώσας = live unobserved.]

Monsieur vit de ses rentes = The gentleman is independent (i.e. has an income of his own).

Apprendre à vivre = To learn manners.

Je lui apprendrai à vivre = I will teach him better manners (as a threat).

Comme c'est vécu! = How true to life!

Voie.

Ils en sont venus aux voies de fait = They came to blows.

Il est toujours par voies et par chemins = He is always on the move, rambling.

Les affaires sont en voie de hausse = Things are looking up.

Être sur la voie = To be on the right scent.

Je suis en voie de le finir = I am in a fair way to finish it.

Voilà.

Comme le voilà sale! = Just see how dirty he is!

Ne voilà-t-il pas qu'il est revenu = Who should come back but he?

Voilà comme vous êtes = That is just like you; That's the sort of man you are!

Voilà comme je suis = You must take me as I am; That's my way.

Par exemple, voilà qui est fort! = Well now, I like that!

Voir.

On n'y voit goutte = One can see nothing.

J'y vois trouble = I see dimly; My sight is dim.

Vous n'avez rien à y voir = That is no business of yours.

Voir. (*cont.*) *Au vu et au su de tout le village* = Openly, in the sight of the whole village.

Je vous vois venir = I see what you are driving at.

J'ai voulu voir par moi-même = I wished to see with my own eyes.

Il nous en a fait voir de toutes les couleurs = He told us all sorts of tales; He worried us beyond all bearing.

Oy, voy, et te tay
Si tu veux vivre en paix =
Hear, see, and say nought; Be swift to hear and slow to speak.

[German: 'Wer will haben gute Ruh,
Der sehe, höre und schweige dazu.'
These are derived from the medieval Latin: *Audi, vide, tace, si vis vivere in pace.*]

Voix. *Je n'ai pas voix au chapitre* = (lit.) I have no right to speak; (fig.) My opinion is not listened to.

**La voix du peuple est la voix de Dieu* = Common fame is seldom to blame; *Vox populi, vox Dei.*

[This saying, which can be traced back to Hesiod, has several variants. Compare S. Augustine: 'Securus orbis judicat'; and the German: 'Volkes Stimme, Gottes Stimme.']

Volée. *Il a obtenu cela entre bond et volée* = He obtained that at a lucky moment.

À toute volée = At random; At full swing.

Il est de la haute volée = He is a tip-top swell, of the first water, of the upper ten.

Voler. (to fly.) *On pouvait entendre voler une mouche* = One could hear a pin drop.

Voler. (to steal.) **Il ne l'a pas volé* = He richly deserves it.

Voleur. **Quand les voleurs se battent, les larcins se découvrent* = When thieves fall out, honest men get their own.

Volonté. **La bonne volonté est réputée pour le fait* = The will is as good as (is taken for) the deed.

Faire ses quatre volontés = To act according to one's own sweet will.

Vôtre. *Je serai des vôtres* = I shall be one of your party; I shall be on your side.

Vous avez fait des vôtres = You have committed follies yourself; You have played pranks too.

Vouer. *Je ne sais à quel saint me vouer* = I do not know which way to turn; Now I'm in a cleft stick.

Vouloir. **Vouloir c'est pouvoir* = Where there's a will there's a way.

[Also: *La volonté rend tout possible;*
and: *À bonne volonté ne faut faculté.*
Qui a bonne tête ne manque pas de chapeaux.
Jeanne d'Albret's motto was: 'A cœur vaillant rien d'impossible,' and it was adopted by her son, Henri IV. Previously it had been used by Jacques Cœur (d. 1456), the merchant prince of Bourges.
'Impossible est un mot que je ne dis jamais.'—COLLIN D'HARLEVILLE, *Malice pour Malice*, i. 8.
Napoléon I, in a letter to Lemarois, 9th July 1813, wrote: 'Ce n'est pas possible, m'écrivez-vous, cela n'est pas français.'
'Mirabeau disait un jour à son secrétaire: "Impossible! ne me dites jamais ce bête de mot."'—DUMONT, *Vie de Mirabeau*, quoted in Carlyle's *French Revolution*, vol. ii, p. 118.

'Impossible! Who talks to me of impossibilities?'
CHATHAM.

'In the lexicon of youth which Fate reserves
For a bright manhood, there is no such word as—fail.'
LYTTON, *Richelieu*, ii. 2.

'Possunt quia posse videntur.' VIRGIL, *Aen.* v. 231.

Another proverb says: *Savoir c'est pouvoir*, which probably is a rendering of the saying in Bacon's *Novum Organum* (bk. ii. 3): 'Scientia et potentia humana in idem concidunt.']

Que voulez-vous? = 1. What do you want? What can I do for you? 2. What was to be done? 3. What can you expect? 4. It is quite what one would have expected.

**Vous l'avez voulu!* = It is your own fault; You would have it; You have brought it on yourself.

['Vous l'avez voulu, George Dandin!'
MOLIÈRE, *George Dandin*, i. 9.]

On ne peut lui en vouloir = One cannot be angry with him, blame him.

En veux-tu? en voilà! = As much as ever you like.

Vouloir. (*cont.*) *Il y en avait à bouche que veux-tu* = There was an abundant supply of it; There was plenty for every one.

Il sait ce que parler veut dire = He understands the hidden meaning; He takes the hint.

Je le veux bien = With pleasure! I have no objection.

Vrai. **'Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable'* = Truth is stranger than fiction.

[Boileau, *Art Poétique*, lii. 48. Balzac says: 'La hardiesse du vrai s'élève à des combinaisons interdites à l'art, tant elles sont invraisemblables.']

Z.

Zèle. *Surtout, messieurs, pas de zèle!* = Above all, gentlemen, don't be too anxious! Don't try to hurry things on.

[Words attributed to Talleyrand by Sainte-Beuve (*Critiques et portraits*, iii. 324) on receiving the staff of the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères.

For another account, see King's *Classical and Foreign Quotations*, 3rd edition, p. 340.

Compare: Μισεῖ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὰς ἄγαν προθυμίας = God hates overzeal. Euripides, *Orestes*, 708.

Talleyrand and Voltaire have been fathered with most of the anonymous *bons mots* that are the common coin of cynicism. For example: *Ils n'ont rien appris ni rien oublié* of the Bourbons in 1815; *Ma foi! vous êtes bien curieux* to a creditor asking when his bill was to be paid; *C'est plus qu'un crime, c'est une faute* of the Duc d'Enghien (Mar. 20, 1804, and more likely due to Fouché or to Boulay de la Meurthe); *Voilà le commencement de la fin* after Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. This latter saying is found in the Prologue of *Midsummer Night's Dream*: 'That is the true beginning of our end.'

Again: *Défiez-vous des premiers mouvements; ils sont presque toujours bons*, really uttered by Comte Montrond.]

Zéro. *C'est un vrai zéro* (*une nullité*) = He is a mere cipher.

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ADDENDA

Abatage. *Il a écopé un fameux abatage* (fam.) = He got a rare old dressing-down.

Abrutir. *On s'abrutit à ce travail-là* = That sort of work turns one's brain, makes one silly.

Accommoder. *Vous êtes bien accommodé!* = You are in a mess and no mistake!

Accoucher. *Allons, accouche, mon bon!* (fam.) = Come now, my boy, out with it! (cough it up).

Affaire. *Il fait des affaires d'or* = He is making pots of money; He is making money hand over fist.

Âge. *On apprend à tout âge* = It is never too late to learn.

Aise. *Vous en parlez à votre aise* = It is all very well for you to talk.

Aller. *Il faudra que j'y aille de mes cent sous* (fam.) = I shall have to fork out my five francs.

'*Vous êtes dégoûtant.*' '*Allons bon, quelle insulte!*' = 'You are disgusting.' 'That's done it! You have insulted me."

Il ne faut pas se laisser aller = You should not let yourself go like that; You should take care of yourself.

On y va = I'm coming.

Allure. *Il a de l'allure* (fam.) = He has a distinguished appearance; He looks a classy knut.

Ambiguité. *Il a n'y aucune ambiguité* = It's quite plain sailing.

Amener. *Le voilà qui s'amène!* (fam.) = Lo and behold! here he rolls up! Who should turn up but him?

Ami. *Je l'ai vu avec sa petite amie* = I saw him with his mistress.

Amour. *Il file le parfait amour avec elle toute la journée* = He bills and coos with her all day long.

Anglais. *Tous ces Anglais ont dans le caractère je ne sais quoi de dur et d'insulaire* = 'The Englishman is rather an island than an islander.'
[The English quotation comes from Landor: *Pentameron.* The French I have been unable to trace.]

Animal. *Je ne m'occupe pas de cet animal de Dupont* = I take no notice of that beast (blighter) Dupont.

Après. *Il m' a crié après* = He scolded me.

Arriver. *Ce qui doit arriver arrive* = What must be must be, *Che sarà sarà.*
Il croit que c'est arrivé = He has too big an opinion of himself; He believes that the thing is true.

Assiette. *Perdre son assiette* = To get confused; To lose the thread.
L'assiette au beurre = The good things in the gift of the Goverment.
[The phrase originated after 1871 when under the Third Republic fat jobs were given to quite unsuitable applicants. It was also the title of a very clever satirical weekly during the nineties.]

Attraper. *Vous vous ferez attraper si vous ne travaillez pas* = If you do not work you'll get it in the neck, you'll catch it. (See *Balancer.*)

Audace. *Payer d'audace* = To brazen a thing out.

Avoir. *On les aura, t'en fais pas* = We'll lick them, don't you worry.
[A favourite phrase during the war.]

Balancer. *Il se fera balancer s'il ne se conduit pas bien* (fam.) = He'll get the chuck if he does not behave himself.
[Note: *Envoyer quelqu'un à la balançoire* = To get rid of a person; To send him to the right-about.]

Ban. *Mettre quelqu'un au ban de l'opinion publique* = To hold some one up to the scorn of the whole world.
Rompre son ban = To be out of bounds; To live in a place where one has no right to be.

Baptiser. *Baptiser son vin* = To put water in one's wine.

Barbe. *Quelle barbe!* (fam.) = What an awful bore!
La barbe! (pop.) = Shut up!

Barbet. *Être crotté comme un barbet* = To be as dirty as you like; To be covered in mud from head to foot.

Bateau. *Il nous a monté des bateaux monstres* = He told us most fearful lies; He pulled our legs unmercifully.

Beau. *Il se fait beau* = He is dressing (dolling) himself up.
Il porte beau = He has a fine appearance.

Bébé. *Ta bouche, bébé, t'auras une frite* ! (pop.) = Shut up! Dry up! Stow it!

Bec. *Avoir le bec salé* = To be a thirsty soul; To be always ready for a drink (a soaker).

Bégonia. *Cherrer dans les bégonias* (pop.) = To pull the long bow; To exaggerate.
[*Cherrer* is popular Parisian argot for *Aller*.]

Beurre. *J'ai cherché mon livre partout mais pas plus de livre que de beurre en broche* = I looked for my book everywhere but I could not find it.

Bibi. *C'est pour bibi* (fam.) = That's for number one (i. e. myself).

Bien. *Je boirais bien un verre de vin* = I should not object to a glass of wine.
Je vous le disais bien = Didn't I tell you so?
Je suis du dernier bien avec lui = I am on the most friendly terms with him.
Qu'est-ce qu'il peut bien faire? = What on earth can he be doing?

Bientôt. *Il a eu bientôt fait* = It didn't take him long.

Billet. *Je vous flanque* (or *fiche*) *mon billet que je l'ai vu* (fam.) = I'll take my affydavy that I saw him; I'll eat my hat if I didn't see him.

Blague. *Allons, blague dans le coin!* (fam.) = Come now, no rotting! Chuck being funny! Don't talk nonsense!
Non, sans blague? (fam.) = Really? No kid? Honest injun?
La bonne blague! (fam.) = What a joke!
Il nous fait des blagues tout le temps = He's always stuffing us up.

Bleu. *Je ne suis plus un bleu* = I am no longer a greenhorn; I am up to snuff.
[*Un bleu* is a raw recruit.]

Bobard. *Tout ça, c'est des bobards, on nous l'a trop fait* (fam.) = That's all rubbish, they have tried that on us before.

Bœuf. *Cela faisait un effet bœuf* = That made an enormous effect; It was top-hole, stunning.
[I shall never forget how worried the late C. K. Scott-Moncrieff was over this idiom when he was translating Marcel Proust.]

Bois. *Elle est dans ses bois* = She has her own furniture; She does not live in an hotel or lodgings.

Boîte. *C'est une boîte* = It is a regular hole. (See *Boutique.*)
Ferme ta boîte! (pop.) = Shut your potato trap! Be quiet! (See *Barbe* and *Bébé.*)
Il est bon pour trois jours de boîte = He is sure to get three days in prison.

Bombe. *Faire la bombe* (pop.)= To go on the razzle-dazzle.

Bon. *Il a du bon* = There are good points about him.

Boniment. *Il a sorti un drôle de boniment* = He came out with a queer tale.
Il m'a raconté des boniments = He told me all sorts of flapdoodle.

Borne. *Cela passe toutes les bornes* = That is going much too far; That's the limit.

Bosse. *Il a roulé sa bosse un peu partout* = He has knocked about all over the world.

Botte. *Il y en a des bottes* (fam.) = There are stacks (heaps, tons) of them.

Botter. *Ça me botte* (fam.) = That just suits me.

Boucher. *Ça lui en a bouché un coin* (fam.) = That beat (did) him; He was struck all of a heap.

Bougre. *Il est épatant, ce bougre-là* (pop.) = He is a fair old caution.
[*Bougre* is derived from Bulgarus, an inhabitant of Bulgaria. In the middle ages these were regarded as wild heretics.]

Bourgeois. *Elle n'est pas commode, la bourgeoise* (fam.) = My missus is an awkward customer, not easy to deal with.

Bourrer. *Les journaux nous bourrent le crâne* = Newspapers tell us a lot of rubbish (lies, unreliable statements).

Bout. *Manger du bout des lèvres* = To play with one's food.
C'est tout le bout du monde s'il a cent livres = He has not got more than £100 at the very outside.
Je vais vous accompagner un bout de chemin = I am going with you a little bit of the way.
Un petit bout d'homme = An undersized man, a regular Tom Thumb.

Boutique. *Quelle boutique!* (fam.) = What a hole! (See *Boîte.*)
Cet homme a montré toute sa boutique = That man made an indecent exposure of person.

Branche. *Ma vieille branche* (fam.) = Hello! old bean, fellow.

Brigand. *Vieux brigand!* (fam.) = You old scamp!

Ça. *Avoir de ça* = To be well off. (See *Avoir.*)

Cadeau. *Les petits cadeaux entretiennent l'amitié* = Little gifts keep friendship alive.

Caler. *Il est calé en anglais* (fam.) = He is a swell (nib) at English.
Ce sont des gens calés (fam.) = They are oofy birds, people of substance.

Camp. *Fichez-moi le camp!* (pop.) = You just hop it. Sling yer 'ook.

Carotter. *Il a carotté une permission* (fam.) = He got leave by a trick; He wangled a leave.

Cause. *Il l'a fait en désespoir de cause* = He did it in the last extremity, as a last resource, despairing of success.

Chameau. *Un vieux chameau* (pop.) = An ugly old woman, an old rotter, a dirty dog.

Chanter. *Il nous a fait chanter* = He got money out of us by blackmail.

Chat. *C'est le chat* = The cat did it.
[Used when some one does not wish to be blamed for a misdeed.]
Friand comme une chatte = To have a sweet tooth.

Chauffer. *Ça va chauffer* = We're in for a hot time.
Il le chauffe en vue de l'examen = He is coaching him for his examination.

Chemin. *Je lui ferai faire bien du chemin* = I'll lead him a pretty dance. (See *Pays.*)

Cheviller. *Il a l'âme chevillée dans le corps* = He is tenacious of life; He has as many lives as a cat.

Chic. *Avoir du chic* = To be stylish, fashionable.
[Note: *un chic type* = a decent sort, a good pal.
un type chic = a smart chap, a dandy, a knut. See *Chien.*]

Chien. *Elle a du chien* (*du chic, du cachet*) = She has a way with her; She is fascinating, alluring.
Il en a du chien dans le ventre (fam.) = He is a jolly plucky chap; He's got guts. (See *Cœur.*)
Les chiens aboient, la caravane passe = It is useless to worry about ignorant criticism or abuse.
[An Arab proverb.]

Chose. *Bien des choses chez vous* = Kinds regards at home.
De deux choses l'une = It must be one of two things.

Ciel. *Il n'emportera pas cela au ciel* = He will smart for it.

Cinq. *Il a fait ce travail en cinq sec* = He got through that job in next to no time, in a twinkling, in a jiffy.

Clou. *Mettre au clou* = To pawn; To put up the spout. (See *accrocher.*)

Cochon. *C'est cochon de te conduire comme ça* (pop.) = That's a rotten way to behave; you must be a dirty swine.
Tout homme a dans son cœur un cochon qui sommeille =
'Men, some to business, some to pleasure take,
But every woman is at heart a rake.'
[The French is said to be due to Charles Monselet although I cannot find it in his work. The English comes from Pope's *Moral Essays* (ii. 215). The idea is identical, but the French author shows more gallantry.]

Coco. *C'est un sale coco* (fam.) = He's a rotter, a bad egg.
Un drole de coco = A queer bird, fish.

Cœur. *Avoir du cœur au ventre* = To be plucky; To have guts. (See *Chien.*)
Tais-toi, mon cœur! = Down, little flutterer, down!

Coin. *Il la connaît dans les coins* = He knows all about it; He's a knowing one.

Coller. *Collez ça où vous voudrez* (fam.) = Stick it down anywhere.
Il s'est fait coller au bachot (fam.) = He was ploughed in his Matric.
Entendu! ça colle (fam.) = That's agreed, I'm on.
Ce qu'il est collant, ce type-là (fam.) = What a bore the blighter is!

Comment. *Êtes-vous content? Et comment!* = Are you satisfied? Rather! Sure thing! Not 'arf! I should think so! And how!
[*Je vous comprends* can be substituted for *Et comment!*]

Complet. *Nous étions au grand complet* = The place was crammed; Everyone was there.
Ce serait complet = That would be the last stroke, the extreme limit.

Compliment. *Je rengaine mon compliment* = Then I'll say no more.

Compte. *Je lui ai réglé son compte* = I settled his hash for him; I did for him.
Il m'a fait un compte d'apothicaire = He sent me in a stiff bill (overcharged me).

Conter. *Il ne faut pas m'en conter* = It's no good telling me tarradiddles; Don't try and humbug me.

Coquille. *Il ne sort jamais de sa coquille* = He is a regular home-bird.

Côte. *Il riait à s'en tenir les côtes* = He held his sides with laughter.

Coucher. *Allez vous coucher!* = Don't bother me. Get out of it!

Couler. *Il se la coule douce* = He has an easy time of it.

Coup. *Un coup de théâtre* = A sensational incident; A startling event.
Il n'a pas fichu un coup toute la journée = He has not done a stroke of work all day.
Il m'a fait un sale coup = He played me a low (underhand, dirty) trick.
[Also: *un tour de cochon, une vacherie.*]

Coup. *Il a le coup* = He is a dab at it.
Allons! jetez-en un coup = Come now, put some vim into it.
Il travaille par à-coups = He works by fits and starts. (See *Bâton* and *Bond.*)
Donner le coup de pouce = To give the finishing touch to a picture; To give short weight.

Courir. *La tragédie court les rues* = You find tragedies in every street. (See *Esprit.*)
C'est couru = It's a certainty; The result is already known.
[*Lit.* The race is already run.]

Cracher. *Je lui ai fait cracher mille francs* = I made him fork out (cough up) 1,000 francs.

Crachoir. *Tenir le crachoir* = To absorb the conversation; To hold the floor.

Crêper. *Ces deux femmes se sont crêpé le chignon* = Those two women had a regular set-to, got to blows.

Crime. '*Le crime fait la honte et non pas l'échafaud*' = The scaffold is no disgrace when one is innocent.
[Th. Corneille, *Comte d'Essex*, iv. 3.]

D. *Il a employé le système D* = He showed resource in a difficult fix; He wangled himself out of a mess.
[D stands for *débrouillard*, a man who manages to get along by himself, even by using unscrupulous means, one who has a mind fertile in resource, who knows how to extricate himself from difficulties, to be spry.]

Déjà. *Ce n'est déjà pas si bête* = It is not really so silly.
Comment s'appelle-t-il déjà ? = What on earth is his name?

Démordre. *Il ne veut pas en démordre* = He will not give way, give up his opinion.

Devant. *Il est allé au devant de mes désirs* = He anticipated my wishes.

Diable. *C'est au diable* = It's miles away, an awful way off.
Un bruit de tous les diables = A deuce of a row, racket.

Dieu. *Dieu me pardonne!* = Well I never! Upon my word!

Dieu. *Mon Dieu!* = Heavens! Good gracious! Bless me!
[This is a very mild expression, used by the most prudish and conventional. It must be carefully distinguished from *Nom de Dieu*, which is a violent oath, only used by the lowest classes or by others under great provocation.]

Dire. *C'est dit!* = Agreed! That's settled!
Il n'y a pas à dire = There's no denying that; You can't get away from that.
Je ne vous l'envoie pas dire = I tell you that to your face.
Ce n'est rien de le dire = It's not the word for it.
Ce n'est pas pour dire mais vous n'êtes guère honnête = Excuse my saying so, but you are scarcely honest.

Doigt. *Un doigt de vin* = A toothful of wine.
Il faisait un doigt de cour à cette dame = He had a little flirtation with that lady.
Il fourre le doigt partout = He has a finger in every pie.

Donc. *Faites donc attention!* = Do pay attention; Do look where you're going.
Qu'avez-vous donc? = Why, what's the matter?

Donner. *Ma fenêtre donne sur la rivière* = My window looks out on the river.
Cela me donne froid dans le dos = That sends cold shivers down my back.

Douche. *Je lui ai donné une douche* = I calmed him down.

Douceur. *Il a conté des douceurs à ma fille* = He whispered sweet nothings to my daughter.

Dur. *Nous en avons vu de dures* = We've had a rough time of it.
Je lui en ferai voir de dures = I'll put him through it.

Eau. *Ce projet est tombé à l'eau* = This scheme fell through, came to nothing.

Échelle. *Après cela il faut tirer l'échelle* = That beats everything; That puts the tin hat on it.
Vous me faites monter à l'échelle = You are pulling my leg; You are riling me.
[Also: *Faire grimper à l'arbre.* See *Payer.*]

Écoper. *Il écope toujours pour les autres* = He is always bearing the blame of the faults of others.

Emballer. *Il s'emballe pour le cinéma* = He is a regular film fan.

Embusqué. *Il n'est qu'un embusqué* = He has a soft job; He is only a slacker, shirker, Cuthbert (during the war one who did not join up).

Entendre. *Cela s'entend* = That's understood; Of course.
C'est entendu = That's agreed; Right you are!

Épatant. *Celui-là c'est un type épatant* = That chap is absolutely topping, tip-top, a corker.
Cf. *une histoire épatante* = A rattling good story.

Erreur. *Il n'y a pas d'erreur c'est un voyou* = He's a cad and no mistake.

Espèce. *Espèce d'imbécile!* = You silly fool!
[*Espèce* emphasizes any pejorative term, so *Espèce d'imbécile* is equivalent to *un fameux imbécile.*]

Essayer. *Tu peux toujours essayer* = Just have a try (and you will find you cannot do it).

Être. *Vous y êtes pour quelque chose?* = Are you mixed up in it? Are you responsible for it?
C'est à devenir fou = It's enough to drive one mad.
Si j'étais de vous = If I were in your place.

Exactitude. *L'exactitude est la politesse des princes* = Punctuality is the way princes show they are polite.
[The French is attributed to Louis XVIII by Büchmann and Jacques Laffitte.]

Exemple. *Par exemple!* = 1. To be sure; One must own. 2. Well now! Bless me! 3. I assure you; I would have you know.

Fabriquer. *Qu'est-ce que tu fabriques là?* (fam.) = What are you after (up to)?

Façon. *Sans plus de façons* = Without any more ado.

Fagot. *Du vin de derrière les fagots* = Old wine, the best in the cellar [i.e. that is hidden behind the wood at the back of the cellar].

Faire. *Il se laisse faire* = He lets people do what they like with him.

Faire. *Ne fais pas ta Sophie* (*Julie, Joséphine*) (fam.) = Don't play the prude ; Don't be uppish ; Don't put on airs.

Fait. *Les faits divers* = Current events of minor importance ; From here and there. (A newspaper heading.)

Fermer. *Fermer sa boîte* (*bouche, gueule, malle*) (pop.) = To shut up ; To shut one's potato trap.

Fête. *Je lui ai souhaité sa fête* = I wished him many happy returns.

Fichez. *Fichez-moi le camp!* (fam.) = You just hook it ! Be off at once !

Il ne fiche pas mal de ce que je lui conseille = He does not care a hang for my advice.

Il est fichu = It's all up with him.

Il est fichu comme l'as de pique (*comme un paquet de linge sale*) = He is shockingly badly dressed ; He is deformed.

C'est un jemenfichiste = He is utterly indifferent ; He is a happy-go-lucky lad.

Fils. *Un fils à papa* = The son of a rich influential man who is usually lazy and useless.

Flanc. *Tirer au flanc* (pop.) = To malinger ; To pretend to be ill.

Flûte. *Flûte !* (fam.) = Go to the devil ! Don't bother me ! [An expression of anger, impatience or disappointment. Stronger terms are *Zut* and *Crotte*.]

Fouiller. *Vous n'en aurez pas, vous pouvez vous fouiller* (fam.) = You won't get any, you may be sure of that ; You may whistle for it.

Si tu n'es pas content, tu peux te fouiller (fam.) = If you don't like it, you can lump it.

Fourrer. *Il s'en est fourré jusque là* = He had a jolly good tuck-in.

Frais. *Se mettre en frais* = To take a lot of trouble (fam.).

Frite. *Il est comme deux ronds de frites* (or *flan*.) = He is flummoxed, flabbergasted ; He has had the stuffing knocked out of him.

Gober. *Elle me gobe* (pop.) = She's potty on me.

Goût. *On va lui faire passer le goût du pain* = They are going to cook his goose (kill him off).

Grâce. *De grâce ne faites pas cela* = I beg of you not to do that.

Grouiller. *Grouillez-vous!* (pop.) = Look sharp! Hurry up! Stir your stumps!

Gueule. *Il lui a cassé la gueule* (pop.) = He gave him a sound thrashing; He knocked in his mug.

Hauteur. *Est-il à la hauteur de sa tache* = Is he equal to his task? Is he good enough for the job?

Les Polignac sont des gens à la hauteur = The Polignacs are well-off people (swells).

[Also: *des gens huppés*.]

Ça, c'est à la hauteur = That's the stuff to give them.

Idée. *En voila une idée!* = Well I never! Did you ever hear of such a thing?

Il a une idée de derrière la tête = He has a lurking suspicion.

Jeter. *N'en jetez plus, la cour est pleine* (fam.) = Don't go on, that'll do.

Joli. *C'est du joli!* (fam.) = A nice state of things! It's a shame!

Joli comme un cœur = As pretty as a picture.

Jouer. *Jouer des coudes* = To elbow one's way through a crowd; To make a career for oneself.

Jour. *Les jours se suivent et ne se ressemblent pas* = No one can tell what a day may bring forth.

Jusque. *Un jusquauboutiste* = A whole hogger; A die-hard.

[Clemenceau was so called during the war. Macmahon said on July 9, 1877, 'J'irai jusqu'au bout,' but his courage failed him.]

Là. *Il est un peu là* = He is reliable (clever, up to his job); He is all there.

Tout est là = That's the main thing.

Laisser. *Il ne se laisse pas manger la laine sur le dos* = He does not let people make a fool of him, take advantage of him.

Lettre. *Passer comme une lettre à la poste* = To go without any difficulty; To be as easy as shelling peas.

Main. *C'est une question de tour de main* = It's a matter of knack; You must have the knack to be able to do it.

Marcher. *Ne voyez-vous pas qu'on vous fait marcher?* = Don't you see they are having you on, pulling your leg?
Je ne marche pas = I am not to be taken in by that; I've seen that trick before.

Méchant. *Elle est méchante comme la gale* = She is a regular demon.

Nèfle. *Des nèfles!* (fam.) = No fear! You be hanged! Don't you wish you may get it?
[Also: *Des navets!* and *Et mon œil!*]

Nez. *Il m'a dans le nez* = He can't stand the sight of me; He detests me.
Sa femme le mène par le bout du nez = His wife makes him do whatever she wishes, henpecks him.
Il a fait un drôle de nez = He looked disappointed; He pulled a long face.

Numéro. *Tu parles d'un numéro!* (fam.) = What a queer bird! an odd fish!

Œil. *Il a l'œil américain* = He has his weather eye open.
Il a fait de l'œil à cette jolie fille = He cast amorous glances at that pretty girl; He gave her the glad eye.

Oiseau. '*Même quand l'oiseau marche on sent qu'il a des ailes*' = The man of genius is revealed even in trivial matters.
[The French is a quotation from Lemierre (1723–93).]

Ordre. *Un gymnaste de troisième ordre* = A third-rate athlete.

Original. *C'est un original* = He is a character.

Page (f.). *Il n'est pas à la page* = He is quite out of it; He replies as if he does not know what we are talking about; He is not up to date.

Papier. *Un visage de papier maché* = A wan pale face.

Parler. *Tu parles, Charles* (pop.) = Now you're talking; Not 'arf; I should rather think so.

[This is one of those stock phrases used by those Parisians who like their witty remarks ready made for them. Others of the same nature are: *A la tienne, Étienne* = Your health, my lad; *Ça colle, Anatole?* = How goes it, old man?; *C'est juste, Auguste* = Quite right, old son; *Bas les pattes, Agathe; Après toi, Benoît; T'as tort, Victor; As-tu fini, Rosalie? Sans rancune, Rodogune; T'es belle, Adèle; Où que tu nous mènes, Philomène? Un peu, mon neveu* = You bet, old chap; I believe you, my boy.]

Vous parlez d'un dîner = It was *some* dinner, I assure you.

Part. *De la part de qui?* = What name shall I say? (what a parlourmaid asks a caller).

Pas. *C'est un grand pas de fait* = That's half the battle.

Passer. *Passe pour cette fois* = I'll let you off this time.

Patte. *Il faut qu'elle donne son coup de patte* = She must make one of her nasty ill-natured remarks.

Je ferai le chemin à pattes (fam.) = I'll foot it.

Peau. *Il a cette femme dans la peau* = He is violently in love with that woman.

J'aurai la peau de cet homme = I shall kill that man.

Peau de balle et balai de crin (pop.) = Absolutely nothing.

Pelle. *Ramasser une pelle* = To come a cropper.

Penser. *Ah! j'y pense* = I say! by the way.

O! Georges, vous n'y pensez pas! = Oh! George, surely you don't mean it! you're not serious!

Perdre. *Il ne perdra rien pour attendre* = He will be punished sooner or later.

Pied. *Il a les pieds nickelés* (or, *en dentelles*) (fam.) = He is not willing to do anything.

Pige. *Je lui fais la pige en histoire* (fam.) = I beat him in history.

Piger. *Piges-tu la combine?* (fam.) = Do you twig the move?

Il s'est fait piger (fam.) = He got nabbed.

Plaider. *Plaider le faux pour savoir le vrai* = To tell lies in order to get at the truth.

Plan. *Laisser en plan* = To leave in the lurch. (See *Planter.*)

Pommade. *Passer de la pommade à quelqu'un* = To butter some one up ; To flatter grossly.

Porter. *Ce vieillard porte beau encore* = That old man is young for his years, is still lively.

Pouce. *S'en mordre les pouces* = To regret an action bitterly. *Et le pouce* = And the rest. (See *Nourrice.*)

Prendre. *Qu'est-ce que je vais prendre si j'arrive en retard* (fam.) = I shall get it hot if I am late.

Prétendre. *A ce que je prétends* = According to my contention.

Prix. *Il a été battu dans les grands prix* (fam.) = He was jolly well licked (beaten).
Au prix où est le beurre = At the price of things as they are ; As things go.
Être hors de prix = To be at a fabulous price.

Qui. *Payer un verre ? Mais chez qui ?* (pop.) = Stand you a drink ? What do you take me for ? (Not much ; Not if I know it.)

Raide. *Il va nous en raconter des raides* = He is going to tell us a set of tall stories.
Raide comme une barre de fer (or, *bâton*) = As stiff as a poker. (See *Avaler.*)

Rattraper. *Que je t'y rattrape* = Let me just catch you at it again.

Regarder. *Tu ne m'as pas regardé* (fam.) = What do you take me for ? A silly fool ? (an emphatic refusal.)

Remettre. *Je ne vous remets pas* = I do not recognize (recollect) you.
Je m'en remets à lui = I leave it to him.

Renvoyer. *On m'a renvoyé de Caïphe* (or, *Hérode*) *à Pilate* = They drove me from pillar to post.

Réplique. *Pas de réplique !* Not a word now ! Don't bandy words with me.

Revenir. *Sa figure ne me revient pas* = I don't like the look of him, the cut of his jib.

Rhume. *Il a pris quelque chose pour son rhume* (fam.) = He was severely defeated ; He got his gruel.

Rien. *Il n'en est rien* = It is nothing of the sort.

Rien. *J'écoute sans avoir l'air de rien* = I am listening although they do not think so.

Rincer. *Se rincer l'œil* = To feast one's eyes on anybody or thing.

Rire. *Vous voulez rire?* = I suppose you're joking; You don't mean it.

Sang. *Mon sang n'a fait qu'un tour* = I was thoroughly upset.

Sauce. *Ils m'ont mis à toutes les sauces* = They gave me all sorts of jobs to do.

Sort. *Coquin de sort!* = Rotten bad luck.

Sou. *Il est fichu comme quatre sous* = He is dressed like a guy; It's a job done anyhow. (See *Ficher.*)
Il n'est pas généreux pour deux sous = He is as stingy as a miser.

Tabac. *Passer à tabac* = To give a thrashing, a rough handling; To manhandle.

Tant. *Il y en a tant et plus* = There is more than enough.

Taper. *Il m'a tapé de cent francs* (fam.) = He touched me for a hundred francs.
Cette fille m'a tapé dans l'œil = That girl has taken my fancy.
Il me tape sur les nerfs = He gets on my nerves; He gets my back up.

Temps. *Nous avons tout le temps* = We have loads of time.

Triste. *Triste comme un lendemain de fête* = As dull as ditch-water.

Type. *C'est un bon type* = He's a brick.

Valoir. *Cela ne vaut pas chipette* = That is not worth a rap, a cuss.

Violon. *C'est son violon d'Ingres* = It is a hobby of which he is prouder than of his great talent.
[The painter Jean D. A. Ingres (1781–1867) was prouder of his mediocre powers as a violinist than of his fame as the greatest classical painter of his day.]

Voir. *Je ne peux pas voir ce type-là* (fam.) = I cannot stand the sight of that fellow.